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DRAGON®

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

DRAGON®

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A Funny Thing Happened . . .

By Steve Winter

"*Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it.*"

E. B. White

Considering the hundreds if not thousands of roleplaying games that have been published, is it surprising that only a relative handful have been "comedy" games? We have a few straight-up humor games: *Toon*, *Paranoia*, *Low Life*, *Ghostbusters*. We have games that are parodies of their genres or even of themselves: *HackMaster*, *Macho Women with Guns*, *Spaceship Zero* (a game so subtly thorough in its parody that an alarming number of people never realized a joke was involved). We have games meant to be played straight but that almost always devolve into humor: *Gamma World*, any superhero RPG with random power selection.

And then there's every other roleplaying game in existence. No matter how serious a particular genre or set of rules is meant to be, humor is bound to worm its way in. Keeping it out takes a tyrannical Dungeon Master, players with fanatical dedication to seriousness, or both.

Let's face it: When a great one-liner pops into your head at the table, only a person with towering willpower can hold back from blurting it out. It's who we are as gamers. The stereotype of the silent, socially awkward D&D player notwithstanding, roleplayers are a gregarious bunch who love a hearty laugh and who can't resist sharing a good joke.

Despite all that natural levity, humor might be the hardest of all atmospheres to maintain in an RPG. Horror is difficult, because the inevitable jokes continually break the tension. But humor is at least as tough, if not tougher, thanks to the give-and-take dynamic of a D&D session. If you don't believe me, sit someone down in front of an audience and order that person to "Be funny . . . NOW!" Unless your victim has uncommon talent or many hours of experience at improvisational theater, the odds favor the next few minutes being a disappointment.

A comic strip is 100 percent under the cartoonist's control. A movie or a TV show can be tightly scripted and can shoot many takes to maximize the laughs. Stand-up comedians rehearse thoroughly and have to deal with hecklers only occasionally. Trying to run a comedic RPG session is like delivering new material to a room filled with hecklers, and you get exactly one chance to hit all your marks.

That's why, even in April, we don't go overboard with "how to make your D&D game funny" adventures or articles. We'll run an oddball adventure about owlbear racing or offer an article featuring tinker gnome whooshwagons (and even put one on the cover of the magazine), but for the most part, we expect you to bring your own laughs to the table. Or, more correctly, we know you will bring your own laughs to the table, and there's no need for us to weigh things down with many of our own.

Hyrsam, Prince of Satyrs

By Mark Monack

Illustration by Hector Ortiz

The Satyr Prince Hyrsam, he sings
Of times more than mere story—
Before gods or masters or kings,
Before death, fate, or glory.
Why does he cry for days gone by
Beneath locks curl'd and tawny?
He smiles wry as he's heard to sigh
"'Twill be all nonny, nonny!"

–Traditional Faerie Song

Master of Revels, Master of Rebels

Hyrsam is one of the most ancient fey creatures in existence. The eldest son of Oran, the Green Lord, Hyrsam remembers the earliest days of the Feywild, before Corellon and the other gods discovered it, and even before the fomorians held dominion over the plane.

In those days, the Feywild was a brutal but beautiful realm occupied by the fey creatures who would one day become the members of the Court of Stars. No elves, no eladrin, and no drow existed then. Corellon, Sehanine, and Lolth had never yet trodden upon these faerie shores. Gnomes, satyrs, dryads, and treants frolicked and capered in the brightest sunlight, unfettered by the strictures of court or church.

Hyrsam remembers those days well, and his fondest desire has always been to restore the Feywild to that pristine condition. In public, he plays the consummate bon vivant, traveling from court to court with his coterie of musicians and minstrels, entertaining the various fey courts. But in the shadows, he sings secret songs of sedition and rebellion. His father, Lord Oran, actively refutes the rumors about Hyrsam's involvement in the fall of various kingdoms that have collapsed in the wake of his visits, but only because Hyrsam is so careful to keep his hands clean. Not even Hyrsam knows whether the Green Lord actually believes the stories about his son's political intrigues.

Though Hyrsam plays the fool for the nobles of the Feywild, he is both clever and erudite, with an in-depth understanding of how to manipulate others. His true goals are both far-reaching and ambitious: Hyrsam seeks no less than the complete collapse of all fey kingdoms so that the Feywild might return to its original pristine state. To that end, his songs sow the seeds of rebellion wherever he goes, and his revelers offer whatever clandestine assistance they can to rebels and traitors.

Hyrsam Lore

A character knows the following information about Hyrsam with a successful Arcana check:

DC 18: Hyrsam is a handsome satyr with curly locks that fall in wild tangles around his curved spiral horns and down his fair face. His dark eyes flash

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Hyrsam	**Level 23 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, satyr	XP 10,200
HP 215; **Bloodied** 107	**Initiative** +20
AC 37, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 36	**Perception** +22
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Action Points 1; **Saving Throws** +2	

Traits

Hyrsam's Song ✦ Aura 5
Any ally that starts its turn in the aura can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. Any enemy in the aura cannot take actions during Hyrsam's turn. This aura deactivates if Hyrsam cannot take actions.

Revel Leader
If Hyrsam is not deafened, at the start of each of his turns, he can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. He can make a saving throw to end being slowed, immobilized, or restrained, even if the effect does not normally end on a save.

Standard Actions

Fiddlestick ✦ At-Will
Effect: Hyrsam shifts up to half his speed before the attack.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +28 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 18 damage.

Discordant Note (psychic, thunder) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +26 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 19 psychic and thunder damage.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Hyrsam makes two basic attacks.

Irresistible Dance (charm, psychic, thunder) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +26 vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + 19 psychic and thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Hyrsam's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The target moves its speed as a free action.

Triggered Actions

Music Never Dies (healing, teleportation) **✦ Daily**
Trigger: Hyrsam is not deafened and drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): All effects on Hyrsam end, he regains all his hit points, and he teleports up to 20 squares without needing to see his destination.

Skills Bluff +24, Diplomacy +24, Stealth +23, Thievery +23

Str 18 (+15)	**Dex** 24 (+18)	**Wis** 22 (+17)
Con 23 (+17)	**Int** 21 (+16)	**Cha** 27 (+19)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Supernal
Equipment fiddle, fiddlestick, *horn of revelry*

with hidden passion and rebellious light. He always dresses in ordinary traveling clothes when interacting with commoners, and he is in regal finery when appearing before the nobles of the fey.

A hero of the Court of Stars, Hyrsam has used his powers to topple numerous fomorian strongholds. He can wield his magic fiddlestick like a rapier, to deadly effect. His music, which some say is audible even to the spirit, can charm allies and enemies alike, allowing him to manipulate them both on and off the battlefield.

DC 23: Legend holds that Hyrsam was born from the very first notes of music. Indeed, some go so far as to say that he is music incarnate. As the fey spirit of revelry, he is effectively immortal. If killed, he reappears elsewhere in the Feywild at the next dawn or dusk. Those same legends state that if he is deafened at the moment he dies, he will remain truly dead.

Prince of Satyrs, Prince of Satires

Hyrsam's court is a traveling menagerie of creatures from the Feywild and beyond. Although satyrs and their dark cousins, the satyrs of the night, comprise the majority of his complement, Hyrsam's retinue also includes dryads strolling with lamia, eladrin traveling with drow, and gnomes capering alongside fomorians. Almost as noteworthy are the revelers who join him from distant planes, including renegade genasi, genies, githyanki, and even dwarves, humans, and halflings.

Hyrsam welcomes everybody into his circle, regardless of race or alignment. The only requirements for his revelers are a sincere love of the Feywild, a talent for music or storytelling, and a willingness to set aside the prejudices of their former lives and live in harmony with the other revelers. That said, Hyrsam has the most fondness for those who share his dream of returning the Feywild to its original unfettered condition.

Encountering Hyrsam

A Dungeon Master might incorporate Hyrsam into an ongoing Feywild campaign that is reaching the end of the paragon tier in a number of ways.

Hyrsam, Savage

Hyrsam's dream is not an innocent one. He revels in memories of the Feywild as a place of savage beauty. Mighty, legendary beasts populated the Feywild in the days before the fomorians tried to establish dominion over it. When the fomorians, and later the gods, rose to power, they drove many of these massive beasts into the most distant reaches of the Feywild.

Hyrsam knows these places, and he knows the songs that can soothe and control these great beasts of antiquity. Hyrsam occasionally unleashes one or more of these creatures on an unsuspecting castle, seeking to reduce its massive fortifications to rubble.

The adventurers might be present during one of these rampages, and the rulers of the kingdom could call upon them to stop the legendary creatures.

Hyrsam as Companion

The heroes need not encounter Hyrsam as an adversary. Hyrsam might accompany them as an ally in a mission to overthrow an Unseelie despot or a corrupt archfey. In such a scenario, prepare Hyrsam as a level 23 companion (leader). Use his monster statistics as a guide, but change his hp to 140 and give him 20 healing surges, as well as access to every bardic ritual and any other rituals you think he might have.

Subsequent investigations might give hints that Hyrsam and his revelers were involved.

Hyrsam, Revolutionary

Because Hyrsam seeks the complete collapse of civilization and a return to the natural anarchy of the original Feywild, he deliberately foments discord within the kingdoms through which he travels. The adventurers might have to defend a noble ally who has become a target of the Satyr Prince.

At first, the adventurers must deal with disgruntled merchants or peasants who seem to be blowing petty grievances out of proportion. Later, they might discover secret shipments of arms into the realm. Finally, they must battle the instigators and armed revolutionaries attempting to topple the kingdom.

The adventurers could try to confront the revolutionaries head-on, although this tactic might result in the loss of innocent lives. Or the heroes could try to find Hyrsam and convince him to call off the revolution. Perhaps the Satyr Prince mistakenly believes that the characters' noble ally is in fact a brutal tyrant. If they convince Hyrsam of the truth, and perhaps help him topple a true tyrant, they might save their ally's kingdom—at least for now.

Hyrsam, Thief and Lover

The Green Lord approaches the adventurers with an urgent matter requiring the utmost discretion. The crown of Tiandra, the Summer Queen, has been stolen, and Oran fears that his son is the thief. Hyrsam has fled deep into the Maze of Fathagn. Lord Oran beseeches the party to recover the crown and his son from the Maze and discover why Hyrsam has brought the entire Feywild to the brink of civil war.

The party ventures into the Maze of Fathagn—a dense and impenetrable forest. (The Maze of Fathagn is described in *Heroes of the Feywild*™.) They must befriend the eladrin who dwell within and persuade one to serve as a guide, lest they become hopelessly lost. During the journey, they learn that Hyrsam was one of the first fey born in these woods and that he knows them better than any living being. After encountering the increasingly more dangerous and deadly residents of the forest, they must confront Hyrsam. The Satyr Prince is willing to turn over the crown to the heroes if they make one promise: They must tell Tiandra's entire court that he foolishly kept it as a token of their torrid affair, but when its loss created an uproar, he fled, ashamed that Tiandra would toy with his heart so. If related, this story forces Tiandra to admit to the affair before her husband and their supporters. Sly Hyrsam knows that such an admission will do more to tarnish her reputation and weaken her rule than any stolen trinket ever could.

HYRSAM, BACK STORY

A character of any alignment or outlook can incorporate Hyrsam's ongoing saga into his or her personal story by using a background, theme, or treasure. Some ideas for incorporating Hyrsam into a character's background include the following:

- Hyrsam has chosen your character as a protégé. He was drawn to your character's flair for the dramatic, artistic bent, and alluring voice, and now offers both adventuring opportunities and advice.
- Hyrsam toppled the kingdom your character would have inherited.
- Your satyr character believes that Hyrsam is his father, and he or she wants the Satyr Prince to acknowledge his son.
- Your character heard Hyrsam's songs as a child and raced into the woods to find the Satyr Prince, only to discover that Hyrsam and his entourage had crossed back to the Feywild, leaving behind only tantalizing memories of his ballads.

New Monster Theme: Hyrsam's Revelers

Some of Hyrsam's most dedicated and talented followers pledge themselves as revelers—committed fey who are willing to lay down their lives to protect the Satyr Prince. Hyrsam's followers come from all walks of life and can come from any plane, but those who become true revelers are the ones Hyrsam would trust with his life and his darkest secrets.

Any humanoid creature can potentially become a reveler of Hyrsam. All that is required is a love of the Feywild and a musical talent. Each reveler can play at least one musical instrument like a virtuoso, is conversant with a variety of musical styles, dances like a professional, and sings with perfect pitch. Creatures that display this theme appear even wilder than their nonthematic counterparts. Their hair is tousled, their eyes have a manic gleam, and magical music surrounds them, even when they are not playing their instruments. They can also suppress this magical musical effect when they need to operate with more discretion or stealth.

Ability Modification: A reveler must have a Charisma score of 18 or higher. If a chosen creature fails to meet this requirement, Hyrsam can increase its Charisma score to 18 or higher.

Attack Powers

Creatures with the Hyrsam's reveler theme use their natural talents to confound and madden their enemies.

Disappear into the Music

Lurkers and other revelers who rely on stealth often manifest this ability. Its effect is to fill the battlefield with music that causes listeners to disregard the user. The ability tricks listeners' minds into viewing the musician as a harmless part of the musical background.

Triggered Actions

Disappear into the Music (illusion) ✦ **Encounter**

Trigger: An enemy takes damage from one of the reveler's basic attacks.

Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy cannot see the reveler (save ends).

Fey Intoxication

Controllers and leaders favor this unusual song because it instills in the reveler's allies a feeling of warmth and safety, and in the reveler's enemies, a debilitating delirium.

Standard Actions

Fey Intoxication (charm) ✦ **Encounter**

Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); level + 3 vs. Will.

Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).

Effect: Each ally in the burst gains temporary hit points equal to one-half the reveler's level.

Hyrsam's Dance

Brutes, soldiers, and lurkers prefer this tune because it allows them to rearrange the battlefield to their liking. Each plays or hums a compelling dance that causes a chosen target to dance with one of its allies across the battlefield.

Triggered Actions

Hyrsam's Dance (charm) ✦ **Encounter**

Trigger: An enemy takes damage from one of the reveler's basic attacks.

Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy uses its actions on its next turn to move toward its nearest ally, grab that ally, and move the grabbed ally. While doing so, the enemy gains a +2 bonus to speed and a +5 bonus to the grab attack roll.

Sympathetic Resonance

Controllers enjoy this secret tune because it creates a musical link between the creature and its target. Every object has a unique resonance. If the reveler can determine that resonance (thereby hitting with the attack), the target takes damage.

Standard Actions

Sympathetic Resonance (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature or object); level + 3 vs. Fortitude.

Hit: Level + 8 thunder damage, doubled if the target is an object.

Utility Powers

Satyr Dance

Revelers can learn to dance to the rhythm of battle, weaving through a melee almost effortlessly.

Move Actions

Satyr Dance ✦ **At-Will**

Effect: The reveler shifts up to half its speed.

Song of Revelry

A reveler can sing a potent melody that energizes his or her allies.

Traits

Song of Revelry ✦ **Aura** 2

Any ally that starts its turn in the aura and is not deafened can make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end. This aura deactivates if the reveler cannot take actions.

Distracting Airs

Some revelers manifest fey music around them that distracts their enemies.

Traits

Distracting Airs ✦ **Aura** 1

Any enemy in the aura that is not deafened can take no actions during the reveler's turn. This aura deactivates if the reveler cannot take actions.

Preternatural Beauty

The fey magic that transforms creatures into revelers sometimes also gifts them with preternatural beauty. Such creatures are fascinating and mesmerizing to look at.

Traits

Preternatural Beauty

The reveler gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against melee and ranged attacks made by enemies who can see the reveler.

New Magic Items

Hyrsam has invented numerous musical instruments, both magical and mundane. In addition to the syrinx (or pan flute), Hyrsam developed the fiddle (and fiddlestick), as well as the magic *horn of revelry*.

Hyrsam Fiddle

A Hyrsam fiddle is designed especially for bardic magic, but it is valuable to anybody who specializes in thunderous attacks or invading a person's mind. Because the fiddle is magically enchanted and reinforced, it can be played using almost any handheld object as a bow, or even plucked by hand.

Hyrsam Fiddle Level 3+ Uncommon

This finely crafted fiddle bears a glamer that betrays its fey origin.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Wondrous Item
Enhancement Bonus: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Properties
✦ Bards can use this item as an implement for bard powers and bard paragon path powers.
✦ When you hold a *Hyrsam fiddle* in one hand and a *Hyrsam fiddlestick* in the other, you gain a +1 shield bonus to your AC and Reflex.

Attack Power ✦ Daily (Free Action)
Trigger: You miss with a charm, psychic, or thunder implement attack power.
Effect: Reroll the triggering attack roll, and use either result.

Hyrsam Fiddlestick

This violin bow never requires rosin and always produces a clear tone. The bow is enchanted to be stronger than steel and sharper than glass, so the user can wield it like a rapier or short sword.

Hyrsam Fiddlestick Level 3+ Uncommon

This finely crafted fiddlestick is carved from wood and woven with strands of mithral.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Light blade
Enhancement Bonus: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Property
If you hold a *Hyrsam fiddlestick* in one hand and a *Hyrsam fiddle* in the other, you gain the highest enhancement bonus between them as an item bonus to any skill check associated with a bardic ritual.

Attack Power ✦ Daily (Free Action)
Trigger: You miss with a melee or close attack made with this item.
Effect: Reroll the triggering attack roll, and use either result.

Horn of Revelry

No musician need play alone when an entire coterie of fey musicians is only a note away. Hyrsam crafts these items for his friends, but some have found their way into the hands of others—or perhaps into the treasure troves of creatures who have bested the recipients of these horns.

Horn of Revelry Level 9 Uncommon

This horn is crafted from five types of polished wood, fitted together via complicated grooves. It plays a unique sound that begs to be joined in harmonies.

Wondrous Item 4,200 gp

Utility Power (Conjuration) ✦ **Daily** (Minor Action)
Effect: You conjure four satyr musicians in unoccupied squares adjacent to you, and they begin playing instruments.

The satyrs remain adjacent to you when you move, and when you do so, you can move the satyrs to other unoccupied squares adjacent to you. Enemies cannot move through a satyr's space, but allies can.

Each satyr adjacent to you grants you a +1 item bonus to all defenses and saving throws. Each time an attack misses you or you succeed on a saving throw, one satyr disappears, and the bonus granted by this power decreases by 1. When the bonus reaches 0, all the satyrs are gone and the power ends. Otherwise, the effect lasts for 1 hour.

About the Author
Mark "Wrecan" Monack is a freelance writer for Wizards of the Coast and other RPG publishers, and he is the author of the popular Unearthed Wrecana blog. He dedicates this article to his epic wife and daughters.

Winning Races:

Tinker Gnomes

By Daniel Helmick

Illustration by Ralph Horsley

No one is precisely sure where tinker gnomes originated, since most of their earliest records were destroyed in a fire resulting from dubious experiments in advanced record-keeping technology. Despite this event, most tinker gnomes insist that they can trace the personages and events surrounding their family lines all the way back to their creation by the god Reorx. This assertion suggests that entire swaths of tinker gnome history are the product of sheer invention. To anyone who knows tinker gnomes, such a hypothesis seems a strong possibility.

Tinker gnomes are industrious to the extreme, exhibiting an obsessive need to build and redesign devices to help with every facet of their hectic lives. These gnomes challenge the limits of their world's scientific and magical knowledge on a daily basis. The average tinker gnome generally regards those few members of the race who are uninterested in technology as either lazy or insane, since satisfaction with the status quo and reliance on mundane solutions is nearly unheard of in tinker gnome society.

Though all tinker gnomes have a penchant for invention and engineering, relatively few are truly gifted in this area. The bulk of gnomish experimentation relies on trial and error, and most gnomes cheerfully acknowledge that the majority of their

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efforts end in failure. This fact does not disturb them, however; they are always ready to move onward to their next pet project.

Racial Traits

Average Height: 2´8˝-3´3˝
Average Weight: 44-55 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Intelligence; +2 Dexterity or +2 Constitution
Size: Small
Speed: 5 squares
Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, choice of one other
Skill Bonuses: +2 Arcana, +2 Thievery

Lab Conditioning: You have the *lab conditioning* power.
Quick Fix: You can make Arcana checks to disable, identify, or sense magical phenomena, and Thievery checks to pick locks or to disable or identify devices, as a minor action instead of a standard action. But if you do so, your haste causes you to take a -4 penalty to the check.
Use What's at Hand: You gain proficiency with improvised weapons other than unarmed attacks.

Lab Conditioning Tinker Gnome Racial Utility

When the experiment goes awry, you know how to get out of the way of the results.

Encounter
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: An area or close attack hits or misses you, or any attack misses you.
Effect: If you take any damage from the attack, halve that damage. You then shift up to half your speed.

Physical Qualities

Tinker gnomes average about three feet in height, and around fifty pounds in weight—slightly stout, but still nimble. Their hair is fine and pale—usually platinum blond or white—and most of the males grow luxuriant beards and mustaches. Tinker gnomes' skin comes in varying shades of tan, and wrinkles develop at an early age.

When on the job or traveling, tinker gnomes prefer to wear heavily modified thick leather aprons festooned with all manner of small tools. A tinker gnome is always prepared to make improvements, no matter the situation.

Attitudes and Beliefs

The need for innovation among tinker gnomes is legendary. Tinker gnomes think nothing of spending years—even decades—in the creation of complex (and often faulty) gadgets with no practical purpose. The creators of such devices seem to have little or no concern about safety in testing their dubious creations, and the results of such tests are sometimes fatal. Rare is the dedicated tinker gnome who lives to a ripe old age.

The majority of other races find tinker gnomes difficult to understand. Tinker gnomes speak quickly and endlessly, stringing together long sentences without care for natural pauses in the conversation or social cues. They feel that they have to race to complete their trains of thought before they are lost forever. More often than not, tinker gnomes end their sentences only after the listener verbally or forcibly instructs them to stop.

Tinker gnomes foster a love of bureaucracy that transcends even the most dedicated middlemen of other races and societies. Dozens—if not hundreds—of guilds, many of which feature overlapping areas of expertise, drive the tinker gnome settlements. If a tinker gnome cannot find a suitable guild for his or her branch of investigation, the gnome does not hesitate to found a new one—regardless of interest, need, or purpose.

Every tinker gnome has three names. The first name is the given name, which details the name and deeds of every member of the gnome's family tree. The second name is a shortened version, which merely points out the highlights of the family history. The third name is a nickname, usually bestowed upon the gnome by members of other races. The nickname usually consists of the first few syllables of the gnome's full name. Most gnomes find these nicknames to be a mild indignity, but those who have regular dealings with other races tolerate their use.

The patron deity of the tinker gnomes is Reorx, the Creator. But the tinker gnomes are not especially religious, so they pay their deity little more than lip service, except for the observance of the Lifequest (see below). Tinker gnome priests do exist, but they are few and far between.

Tinker Gnome Communities

More than ninety-five percent of all tinker gnomes on Krynn dwell in a single dormant volcano. The gnomish name for the volcano is nearly a hundred words long, and most other races cannot pronounce it at all. Therefore, it has earned the sobriquet Mount Nevermind. The Naming Guild insists that this nickname was the utterance of an early human visitor to the settlement, who shouted "Never mind!" after a friendly member of the Greeting Guild attempted to welcome the beleaguered man to the mountain.

Tinker gnomes occasionally visit or even dwell in human cities, though most humans who live near them take great pains to limit their need for redesigning items, since such well-meaning endeavors can result in the malfunction or even destruction of useful devices. Some tinker gnomes also make their homes in predominantly kender and dwarven communities, though the gnomes tend to isolate themselves within their own enclaves.

Tinker Gnome Adventurers

Most tinker gnomes prefer to stay within their own enclaves, researching their next projects. A few, however, find the adventuring life a useful means of discovering new research topics, as well as of field testing prototype equipment.

Artificer

The artificer is the default adventuring class of the tinker gnome. Innovation and fabrication are the tinker gnome's strongest suits, and the path of artifice is the perfect expression of these and other creative endeavors.

Bard

Though tinker gnomes are not musical by nature, it cannot be denied that the bardic pursuit of knowledge across many and varied areas of study is, for them, an attractive notion. Bardic tinker gnomes often neglect other aspects of their chosen profession in favor of becoming the ultimate polymath. Ironically, most gifted tinker gnome bards avoid the Music-Making Guild and its experimental melodic stylings.

Rogue

Curiosity drives innovation, and satisfying that curiosity occasionally requires a larcenous skill set. The Acquisitions Guild is essentially a Thieves' Guild for tinker gnomes, tasked with procuring materials and goods, or even funding for new projects. For this reason, many guilds find it in their best interest to turn a blind eye to common acts of "acquisition," and the roguish professions are considered to be an acceptable option for young tinker gnomes.

Wizard

The study of wizardry features its own particular specialty of cleverly made devices, and it is only natural that magic-minded tinker gnomes often choose this profession.

Roleplaying a Tinker Gnome

Here are a few points to consider when creating a tinker gnome character.

There is always a better way. Every task, no matter how mundane or minute, can be improved through study, industry, and creativity. Why use a mousetrap when you can design and build a Wind-Powered Troublesome Rodent Detection and Humane Extermination Automaton? True, the beta test version incinerated your cousin's foot, but that's a small price to pay for a rodent-free laboratory, and he seems to like his new Footmatic Pulley-Driven Prosthetic just fine (when it works, anyway).

Never forget your Lifequest. An important concept in tinker gnome society is the observance of the Lifequest. Every tinker has a Lifequest from birth, in addition to his or her normal duties and projects. Completion of the Lifequest safeguards the gnome and his or her bloodline, and it guarantees the gnome a place in the Afterlife. Lifequests are typically completed through the perfect development and understanding of a particular device. Few tinker gnomes have ever fulfilled a Lifequest.

Invention exists for the sake of invention. The prevailing sentiment within tinker gnome society is that creating a perfectly functioning device runs counter to the underlying principles of progress and advancement. A device that fulfills its task without complication or need for improvement is a creative dead end—anathema for most tinker gnomes. Those whose devices work regularly are often subjected to ridicule—or even exile in extreme cases.

Tinker Gnome Characteristics: Abrasive, cheerful, curious, disorganized, excitable, inventive, tenacious

Male Names: Aerodyn, Cog, Conundrum, Dyffed, Gnimsh, Gnosh, Miggins, Saliman, Spanner

Female Names: Angle, Cinder, Dana, Erg, Gnissa, Latitude, Mystie, Pepper, Zenith

Tinker Gnome Utility Powers

Tinker gnomes enhance their ability to innovate over time as they learn to adapt to different situations. Combat is an effective (if draconian) crucible, forcing a rapid evolution of your skills.

Level 2 Utility Power

When inspiration strikes, it's best if you have the means to pursue a new line of thought already at hand.

Smooth Execution — Tinker Gnome Utility 2

Measure twice, cut once.

Encounter
Free Action — **Personal**
Trigger: You make an Arcana, Dungeoneering, or Thievery check.
Effect: Roll the check twice, and take either result.

Level 6 Utility Power

Innovation and leaps of logic are not confined to the laboratory or workshop. Sometimes, the urgency of a life or death confrontation can inspire you to some surprising methods—even if they do tend to throw you off balance.

TINKER GNOMES IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

Tinker gnomes have existed in various settings within the Dungeons & Dragons® cosmology—most notably the Dragonlance® and Spelljammer® settings. Although many tinker gnome characters provide comic relief, others—such as Gnimsh in Dragonlance Legends or Dyffed in the Cloakmaster Cycle—play important roles in the advancement of those stories. The presence of tinker gnomes is expected in the Dragonlance setting, but the race also fits in well with other settings if your DM allows it.

Forgotten Realms® Setting: Tinker gnomes in Abeir-Toril are worshipers of Gond Wonderbringer, in addition to the usual gnome pantheon. These gnomes are among Gond's most devout clergy regardless of character class. The deity's principles sync perfectly with the ideals of tinker society: creation without consideration of practicality or consequence.

Eberron® Setting: This is a great setting for the tinker gnome. The level of technomagical advancement in the world of Eberron provides plenty of space for the inventive tinker gnome to run amok. Tinker gnomes make excellent arcane researchers, airship mechanics, and clockwork engineers. The introduction of tinker gnomes into an Eberron campaign can also have interesting consequences in the realm of Zilargo, where gnomes reign. Perhaps your character is part of a highly valued think tank, or an engineer of House Cannith.

Frantic Inspiration — Tinker Gnome Utility 6

Your intellect allows you to spot weaknesses in a foe's defenses.

Encounter
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You make an attack roll.
Effect: If the attack roll hits the target's lowest defense, then the attack hits.

Level 10 Utility Power

Tinker gnomes have a natural talent for fixing, altering, or even disabling mechanical gadgets—usually through elaborate, if hurried, modification. The modified object might not look anything like it did before undergoing the gnome's enthusiastic ministrations, but it gets the job done.

Jury Rig — Tinker Gnome Utility 10

By adding an extruded sprocket and spot-welding some flanged widgets, you should be able to increase the damage output by thirty-five percent—at least temporarily!

Encounter
Standard Action **Melee** 1
Requirement: You must use this power during a short rest or an extended rest.
Target: One suit of armor or one weapon.
Special: If you have implement powers and are proficient with an implement, you can also choose to target one implement with this power.
Effect: If the target is armor, it adds a +2 power bonus to the wearer's AC until an attack against AC hits the wearer or until the end of the encounter.

If the target is a weapon or an implement, that item gains a +2 power bonus to the next attack roll and damage roll made with the item before the end of the encounter.

Tinker Gnome Feats

The feats in this section enhance the capabilities of tinker gnome characters.

Improved Lab Conditioning

When you need to escape an unsafe situation, your inner reserves help you rise to meet the challenge.

Prerequisites: Tinker gnome, *lab conditioning* racial power

Benefit: When you use your *lab conditioning* racial power, you can also make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.

Inventive Empowerment

Because of your own revolutionary advances in energy transfer, charging magic items has never been easier.

Prerequisites: Tinker gnome, artificer, Arcane Empowerment class feature

Benefit: You gain one additional use of the Arcane Empowerment class feature per day.

Mage Hand Assistant

Sometimes, the only assistant you can really trust is yourself. Through practice and determination, you have made a common cantrip into something much more useful—an invisible set of hands that exhibit fine control.

Prerequisites: Tinker gnome, wizard, *mage hand* cantrip

Benefit: You can use the *mage hand* cantrip to perform Arcana checks made to manipulate magical phenomena, or Thievery checks made to disable devices, open locks, or pick pockets. Both kinds of checks can be made from up to 5 squares away from the target of the check.

Quick Tinker

You can apply your skills with precision and haste.

Prerequisites: Tinker gnome, Quick Fix racial feature, trained in Arcana or Thievery

Benefit: You ignore the –4 penalty for using your Quick Fix racial feature.

In addition, if you have the *jury rig* power, you can choose two targets instead of one whenever you use it.

Gnomish Inventions

The bottom line is this: Tinker gnomes like to make stuff. Whether the item in question is actually useful, necessary, cost-effective, or safe is completely beside the point.

Tinker gnomes have a propensity for long-winded names that painfully and explicitly lay out the purpose and function of every item. A gnomish crossbow, for example, might be referred to as a Handheld, Tension-Powered Device Facilitating the Launch of a Dangerous, Pointy Projectile at the Faces and/or Other Vital Areas of Big Angry Monsters. When pressed, however, a gnome inventor (or just as often, a committee from the Naming Guild) can come up with some less tongue-tying but still amusing names for their creations. Here are a few examples.

Gnomeflinger: Stairs are far too pedestrian and time-consuming for the average tinker gnome. The gnomeflinger is a small catapult designed for rapid travel to and from upper floors in tall structures. The cost includes the system of nets and pads necessary to ensure a safe landing. Base cost: 500 gp.

Napwrecker: This unwieldy contraption can be mounted on a bed's headboard. The user dials the desired wake-up time, and when that time arrives, bells and whistles sound. The napwrecker is notorious for going off at random times when improperly maintained. Base cost: 50 gp.

Stewmatic: The stewmatic is a labor-saving invention intended to prepare savory, hot meals from raw materials with a minimum of effort and without a fire. The user adds raw grains, meats, vegetables, and water to the stewmatic. An hour later, the machine delivers a steaming, tasteless—but nutritious and edible—glop into waiting bowls. The stewmatic feeds the same number of people that the raw materials would have. Base cost: 50 gp.

Whooshwagon: This steam-powered vehicle built of wood and iron has the carrying capacity of a wagon, the overland speed of a warhorse, and the temperament and handling of a severely annoyed donkey. Base cost: 1,250 gp.

Whooshwagon Huge vehicle	
HP 250	**Space** 2 by 3 squares
AC 10, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 3	
Speed 8	
Driver	
A wagon's driver must hold the steering apparatus at the front of the whooshwagon with at least one hand, otherwise the whooshwagon goes out of control.	
Load	
Six Medium creatures; 500 pounds of gear.	
Out of Control	
An out-of-control whooshwagon moves forward at half speed.	
Cover	
A wagon provides cover to its passengers.	
Gnomish Construction	
Any character other than a tinker gnome attempting to control a whooshwagon must make an Arcana or Thievery skill check (easy DC) when attempting to drive or turn. Failure causes the vehicle to come to a stop at the beginning of the pilot's turn. Failure by 5 or more causes a crash.	

About the Author

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Unearthed Arcana

Building Character

Random Background Stories

By Matt Sernett

Illustrations by Kieran Yanner, Tyler Walpole, Adam Danger Cook, Eva Widermann, and Sarah Stone

Every life is a story. Ask anyone to tell that story, and it often starts with where the person was born. The middle of the story occurs somewhere in the past, and the story ends with the present.

Not so with many heroes. In tales of great heroism, we don't always know who the hero was before the story begins. Such notable figures seem to rise, fully formed, into myth. Likewise, many players come to the table with little or no history for their characters. Creating a background can be hard or take a long time, and you never know how much of the work will be used during play. To solve these problems and make the process of coming up with a history more fun, you can roll a random background.

Using a Random Background

To use a random background, create a character as you normally would, but avoid assigning trained skills or buying equipment. If you are automatically trained in a skill (such as wizards being trained in Arcana), you are trained in the skill before you make rolls for your random background.

Some table results grant you training in one or more skills. You cannot gain training in more skills than your class normally allows, but you can gain training in skills that are not on your class's skill list. Also, the first time a table indicates that you would gain training in a skill in which you're already trained, you gain a +2 bonus to that skill instead. You cannot gain the +2 bonus more than once. If a table indicates that you gain training in two skills in which you are already trained, choose one skill to gain the +2 bonus. If you're untrained in a skill required

Other Backgrounds and Character Themes

Other books provide backgrounds or character themes. You can use this system in addition to those. In this case, the first time you would gain training in a skill in which you're already trained, you do not gain a bonus.

The story provided by the character theme or background might not match the results of random rolls on the tables in this article. If that's the case, it's up to you to reconcile the differences creatively.

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by your path through the tables, simply make an untrained skill check to see your result and proceed as the table instructs.

Start with Table 1: Birth Circumstances and move from table to table as your results dictate. Write down your results as you go so you know the story of your character's life.

Improvise the details of your story. The tables might indicate a simple background—for example, a villainous lich might be involved in your past. But the identity of the lich and how it affected your character's world is up to you (and your DM).

Feel free to ignore results that don't make sense. If you're press-ganged in a campaign that occurs in a desert, roll again or come up with a way for the result to make sense. Perhaps you were taken by sky pirates, a ship that sails the sand dunes, or githyanki pirates from the Astral Sea.

Some table results indicate that your life of adventure begins. You can stop rolling on the tables when you get such a result or at any time that you feel you have a complete background for your character. When you've finished rolling on the tables, choose training in skills from your class skills list for any skill training you still lack. Also, if you did not gain a +2 bonus to a skill due to being trained in it twice, you can choose a bonus language instead.

Examples

Below are three example characters and the backgrounds created for them by rolling randomly on the tables. From these rolls, each character builds a different story.

Morgur, Dwarf Warpriest

Before rolling on the tables, Morgur has the following statistics: Str 11, Con 16, Dex 8, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 10. As a warpriest, he is trained in Religion. As a dwarf, he gains a +2 bonus to Dungeoneering checks and Endurance checks. Below are Morgur's random rolls and the results.

Roll 1 (Table 1: Birth Circumstances)
Morgur comes from a farming family (roll of 8).

Roll 2 (Table 2: Siblings)
Morgur has no brothers or sisters (roll of 1).

Roll 3 (Table 3: Leaving Home)
Morgur is sent away for tutelage (roll of 5). Roll on Table 4: Tutelage.

Roll 4 (Table 4: Tutelage)
Morgur accepts religious instruction (roll of 7). Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple.

Roll 5 (Table 27: Called to the Temple)
Morgur's scholarship in the temple and desire to learn impress the priests (roll of 15). They teach him all they can and send him to a tutor. Morgur gains training in Religion. Roll on Table 4: Tutelage.

Roll 6 (Table 4: Tutelage)
Morgur is apprenticed to a great craftmaker or artist (roll of 10). Roll on Table 12: Person to see what happens to the tutor.

Roll 7 (Table 12: Person)
The person turns out to be a family relation (roll of 18). Morgur's life of adventure begins with this revelation.

Results Summary: When Morgur stops rolling on the tables, he has gained a +2 bonus to Religion instead of training in that skill because he was already trained. Morgur still needs to pick all his trained skills.

Morgur's Story: Morgur's family farms the terraced mountainsides of his home town. Although he is the only son of his parents, Morgur leaves with their blessing to follow his faith in Moradin by studying at the deity's great temple in the capitol. There he impresses the priests, but Morgur has a chip on his shoulder about his great knowledge of the faith and his lowly origins. The priests deem him "too great a symbol of faith in the All-Father to remain hidden in the temple." They send him out into the world to spread the word, recommending with a knowing wink that he stop at the king's brewhouse to bless the beer. There Morgur finds that the royal brewmaster is his uncle, brewing the barley from his family's own fields. His lack of knowledge about something as simple as his own family relations, and a new understanding of the importance of their work, humbles Morgur. When he leaves, he does so not to spread his own knowledge and faith but to explore the world and learn from it.

Shayla, Human Thief

Before rolling on the tables, Shayla has the following statistics: Str 12, Con 11, Dex 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 16. As a thief, she is trained in Stealth and Thievery. Below are Shayla's rolls and results. She rolls twice on the birth circumstances table to get results for each parent.

Rolls 1 and 2 (Table 1: Birth Circumstances)
Shayla's first parent is a healer (roll of 7), and she gains training in Heal. Her other parent is a noble (roll of 16), and she gains training in Insight and adds 25 gp to her starting gold.

Rolls 3 and 4 (Table 2: Siblings)
Shayla was separated in youth from her siblings (roll of 20). She rolls on this table again to determine her siblings and determines that she has a fraternal twin (roll of 18).

Roll 5 (Table 3: Leaving Home)
Shayla is sent away for tutelage (roll of 4). Roll on Table 4: Tutelage.

Roll 6 (Table 4: Tutelage)
Shayla studies with an actor (roll of 12). She becomes trained in Bluff. Roll on Table 12: Person to see what happens to the tutor.

Roll 7 (Table 12: Person)
Shayla's tutor is kidnapped by a villain and held for ransom (roll of 11). She must retrieve a specific item for the villain, or she'll never see her tutor again. Roll on Table 5: Villain to determine what kind of villain, and then roll on Table 11: Seeking.

Roll 8 (Table 5: Villain)
The villain who took Shayla's tutor is a warlord (roll of 6).

Roll 9 (Table 11: Seeking)
In her search, Shayla stumbles over the activities of a villain who is offended by her investigations (roll of 12). Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind of villain it is, and then Roll on Table 19: On the Run.

Roll 10 (Table 5: Villain)
The villain offended by Shayla is a devil (roll of 11).

Roll 11 (Table 19: On the Run)
Shayla spies her pursuers long before they find her, and she arranges for some of their enemies to spot them as well (roll of 20). They won't be chasing her—or anyone else—ever again. She gains training in Perception and Streetwise. Her life of adventure begins as word of her ruthless cunning spreads.

Results Summary: When Shayla stops rolling on the tables, she has gained training in Bluff, Heal, Insight, Perception, and Streetwise. Normally she can gain training in only four skills, but because she is a human, she can train in one additional skill. Her starting gold is now 125 gp.

Shayla's Story: Shayla's mother wedded a nobleman, and Shayla grew up in his household with a sister who was a fraternal twin. Her father found a new paramour and put Shayla and her mother on the street, keeping the sister because he preferred her. Shayla grew up on the mean streets, often acting out and committing small crimes, especially against her father's mercantile interests. When her sister came of age and was married, her father sent Shayla a token amount of money for a dowry of her own.

Shayla would have used the coins to break the windows in her father's house, but her mother, always more calm and rational, suggested that Shayla look at the money as a way to turn her hobby of acting into a true profession through tutelage. Shayla enjoyed her time on the stage, but one night she found her teacher missing and a note in his room.

A warlord had learned about Shayla's criminal reputation and her budding acting abilities. The ransom for the return of her beloved tutor was a magic sword held by an evil cult. It would be Shayla's task to infiltrate the cult and steal the weapon. During her attempt, a devil summoned by the cult discovered her. She fled with the devil close on her heels but arranged for it to be spotted by the city guard, who slew the infernal beast.

The cult vanished, taking the magic sword, and Shayla's tutor is still being held by the warlord. She can either seek the evil cult that now knows her face or try to free her tutor by overcoming the warlord's army.

Akmenos, Tiefling Hexblade

Before rolling on the tables, Akmenos has the following statistics: Str 11, Con 18, Dex 12, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 18. As a tiefling, he has a +2 bonus to Bluff and Stealth. Below are his rolls and results.

Roll 1 (Table 1: Birth Circumstances)
Akmenos was born to a craftsperson or skilled artist (roll of 14).

Roll 2 (Table 2: Siblings)
Akmenos has an identical twin (roll of 3).

Roll 3 (Table 3: Leaving Home)
Akmenos's parents promise his service to a noble in order to pay a debt (roll of 19). Roll on Table 33: Nobility.

Roll 4 (Table 33: Nobility)
Akmenos participates in a masquerade ball and delights people with his uproarious behavior, but after the masks come off, he makes the mistake of continuing, which insults guests and embarrasses his host (roll of 8). Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where he ends up after being cast out of the noble's service.

Roll 5 (Table 8: Arrival)
Akmenos arrives at a mountain fastness of dwarves (roll of 4). They ask for his aid in ridding their tunnels of danger. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.

Roll 6 (Table 25: Lost in the Depths)
While wandering through the tunnels, Akmenos is confronted by a horrible mind flayer (roll of 15). Its tentacles flail at him, and everything goes black. He awakens someplace without any idea of how he got there or why the creature let him live. Eerily, he now knows the Deep Speech language. He gains training in Dungeoneering. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where he ends up.

Roll 7 (Table 8: Arrival)
Akmenos arrives at a friend's house (roll of 8). His friend needs his aid. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.

Roll 8 (Table 18: A Friend in Need)

The friend needs Akmenos to convince someone to allow the friend to wed (roll of 11). Roll on Table 28: Mediation to see the results of his attempt.

Roll 9 (Table 28: Mediation)

Akmenos's eloquence impresses those with whom he speaks, and they agree to his terms (roll of 19). He is considered an honored guest and given tokens of their appreciation. His starting gold increases by 10 gp. He gains training in Diplomacy and Insight. His life of adventure starts now.

Results Summary: When Akmenos stops rolling on the tables, he has gained training in Diplomacy, Dungeoneering, and Insight. He also knows Deep Speech. His starting gold is now 110 gp.

Akmenos's Story: Akmenos was born to a great tiefling artist who painted strange pictures with a hellish aspect. The artist, his father, was a gambler who racked up a large debt with a noble. Akmenos was sent to serve in the noble's house as collateral until the debt was paid.

Unfortunately for him, the tiefling's poor manners got him removed from the noble's service while at a ball far from his home. Akmenos found his way to a dwarven fortress in the mountains where he befriended the dwarves and joined their mission to kill a mind flayer in their tunnels. The attempt was an abysmal failure, and the mind flayer held the tiefling in its power, its tentacles latched around his head and questing for his eyes . . .

Some time later, Akmenos awoke at home, with no memory of how he'd arrived there. He learned that his twin brother desired to marry a daughter of the same noble family that Akmenos had served. Through use of his silver tongue, the tiefling arranged for his father's debt to be considered the dowry of the daughter. It was a happy ending for all—except that Akmenos is haunted by strange nightmares and the mystery of why the mind flayer allowed him to live. What happened between his time in the caves and his awakening at home?

Friends from Your Past

Although you can use this system on your own, you and the other players can also roll on the tables together to create a common history. In this case, you interweave the results each person achieves to tell how your characters met and how you might have interacted in the past.

To build a common history, make each roll at the same time, or make your rolls separately and discuss the results before you devise your stories. Each time two characters get the same result on a given table, that's an opportunity to decide that they met in whatever situation is described.

In addition, when one player rolls on the tables and encounters a villain, the next player to encounter a villain can declare that it is the same evildoer (without rolling on Table 5: Villain).

Further, when two players are directed to make the same roll, they can share a result. For example, if two characters have a vendetta against the same villain, they can both use the result of a single roll on Table 9: Vendetta. If the roll is a skill check, one character can make the roll while the other aids.

Finally, any time a table mentions a friend or rival and that person has not already been determined, it can be another character. Choose a character on your own, or assign each one a number and roll for a random determination.

Example

This example uses the following four characters.

Althea, Eladrin Mage

Before rolling on the tables, Althea has the following statistics: Str 11, Con 11, Dex 10, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16. As a mage, she is trained in Arcana.

Ander, Halfling Thief

Before rolling on the tables, Ander has the following statistics: Str 14, Con 11, Dex 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 16. As a thief, he is trained in Stealth and Thievery. As a halfling, he gains a +2 bonus to Acrobatics checks and Thievery checks.

Sorrel, Human Warpriest

Before rolling on the tables, Sorrel has the following statistics: Str 8, Con 16, Dex 12, Int 11, Wis 18, Cha 11. As a warpriest, she is trained in Religion.

Thaven, Human Knight

Before rolling on the tables, Thaven has the following statistics: Str 18, Con 16, Dex 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Roll 1 (Table 1: Birth Circumstances)

Althea was born into a farming family (roll of 8).

Ander comes from a family of soldiers (roll of 6).

Sorrel was cared for by beasts (roll of 19). She gains training in Nature.

Thaven is of noble birth (roll of 16). He gains training in Insight and an extra 25 gp of starting gold.

Roll 2 (Table 2: Siblings)

Althea has two stepsisters (roll of 11).

Ander is the youngest of seven siblings (roll of 16).

Sorrel has two stepsisters (roll of 11).

Thaven has a younger sister (roll of 4).

Althea and Sorrel got the same result. Since their relation to their siblings is by marriage but not blood, they could have the same stepsisters through different parents and different marriages. Also, since both

Sorrel and Thaven are human, Sorrel could be Thaven's younger sister.

In this case, the players of Althea and Sorrel create the story that they both had the same evil stepmother, who has two daughters. When this woman was quite young, she married Sorrel's father. After murdering him and abandoning Sorrel in the woods, she sought a new victim. She found Althea's father, a wealthy landowner, and married him to gain control of his holdings. Sorrel ended up in the care of a sphinx that guarded an ancient crypt. Althea plays the part of Sleeping Beauty to her wicked stepsisters.

Roll 3 (Table 3: Leaving Home)

Althea is press-ganged by pirates while on an errand in town for her stepsisters (roll of 13).

Ander elopes with his sweetheart (roll of 9).

Sorrel's home is destroyed when the sphinx that serves as her parent is killed by Prince Malagaunt, a noble intent on raiding the crypts for valuables. (A roll of 6, and then a roll of 18 on Table 5: Villain.)

Thaven is sent away for tutelage (roll of 5).

Roll 4

Althea leads a failed mutiny against the pirate captain and is imprisoned in a port town run by pirates. (A roll of 8 on Table 34: Press-Ganged, and a result of 3 on her Athletics check.)

Ander's sweetheart is killed by a villain. (A roll of 10 on Table 12: Person.) The player decides that the villain is Prince Malagaunt, who killed the girl when she overheard his scheming.

Sorrel meets Ander, and the two of them agree to pursue their revenge against the noble.

Thaven never makes it to his tutor because he is waylaid. (A roll of 1 on Table 4: Tutelage.)

Roll 5

Althea rots in prison for three years, contracting a disease that gives her a limp and a wracking cough. Upon her release, she tries to reconnect with her father. (A roll of 5 on Table 21: Imprisoned, and a result of 2 on Table 31: Test Your Mettle.)

Ander and **Sorrel** are trapped in the crypts by Prince Malagaunt and must find their way out. (A roll of 12 on Table 9: Vendetta.)

Thaven is charmed by a wizard and taken to be a slave in the wizard's lair. (A roll of 11 on Table 17: Waylaid.)

Roll 6

Althea's father is missing, and she needs to find out why. She gains training in Streetwise. (A roll of 17 on Table 11: Seeking.)

Ander and **Sorrel** have no luck trying to escape the depths. Used to a life of privation in the wild, Sorrel takes this setback in stride, but Ander refuses to eat the bugs and rats they catch, nearly starving to death in the process. (A roll of 2 on Table 25: Lost in the Depths, and rolls of 19 and 4 on Table 31: Test your Mettle.)

Thaven summons his willpower and breaks free during a ritual performed by the wizard. He ruins a magic circle, allowing a demon to be unleashed, and flees in the ensuing chaos. He is pursued, but whether by the demon or the wizard, he does not know. (A roll of 3 on Table 10: Wizard's Tower.)

Roll 7

Althea searches for more information and comes into conflict with a villain. (A roll of 10 on Table 11: Seeking.) The player decides that Prince Malagaunt and Althea's stepmother have married after killing her father. They try to murder Althea for what she knows, but she flees.

Ander and **Sorrel** find a secret passage around the cave-in that Prince Malagaunt used to trap them. They happen upon the prince's camp and steal a map before fleeing from his forces. The map leads to a treasure in a dungeon and hints at magic weapons. Ander and Sorrel decide to find allies to help them reach the treasure so they can use the weapons against the prince. Sorrel gains training in Stealth, and Ander—already trained—gains a +2 bonus to the skill. (A roll of 17 on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.)

Thaven meets Althea while he is on the run, and they agree to help each other avoid their enemies.

Roll 8

Althea and **Thaven** stay ahead of their foes through teamwork, trusting only each other. They both gain training in Insight. (One player rolled a result of 11 on Table 19: On the Run, which both players decided to share.)

Roll 9

Althea and **Thaven** take a wrong turn and run right into the nets of slavers. (A roll of 3 on Table 8: Arrival.)

Roll 10

Althea and **Thaven** are sent to the mines, where they try to escape through the tunnels. They gain training in Dungeoneering. (A roll of 6 on Table 16: Enslaved.)

Roll 11

Althea and **Thaven** emerge from the caves and into some crypts. They find a secret door ajar and follow the sound of footsteps out to a villain's lair. (A roll of 17 on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.) The players decide that the lair is the camp of Prince Malagaunt. There the escaped slaves see a human woman and a halfling stealing a map. Althea and Thaven wonder if the thieves can help them, and they follow as the others depart the camp. Both gain training in Stealth.

The four characters meet up and form an adventuring party with the map to guide their quest. Prince Malagaunt wants them all dead, and a wizard, a

demon, or both seeks Thaven's blood. There might also be a connection between Thaven's noble family and Prince Malagaunt. That sounds like a good start to any campaign!

Table 1: Birth Circumstances

Roll 1d20 to determine who raised you. You might have one or two parents. If you'd like to have parents from different backgrounds, roll once for each parent.

Consider who your parent(s) worked for or with and how that might affect you. Perhaps your parent was an executioner and killed someone whose allies seek revenge, or maybe your family of farmers was cruelly treated by a local lord or tax collector.

After getting a result, proceed to Table 2: Siblings.

d20	Result
1	A poor family. Subtract 25 gp from your starting gold.
2	A criminal. You gain training in Intimidate. Roll on Table 15: Crime to determine your parent's criminal activity and then continue by rolling on Table 2: Siblings.
3	An executioner.
4	A bodyguard.
5	A spy. After determining your siblings in Table 2, do not roll on Table 3; instead, roll on Table 29: Hired to Spy as you are inducted into the family business.
6	A soldier.
7	A healer. You gain training in Heal.
8	A farmer.
9	A diplomat. You gain training in Diplomacy.
10	An undertaker.
11	A priest. You gain training in Religion.
12	A lawyer. You gain training in Diplomacy.
13	A scholar and teacher. You gain training in History.
14	A craftsperson or skilled artist.
15	A merchant.
16	A noble. Add 25 gp to your starting gold. You gain training in Insight.
17	A great villain. Roll on Table 5: Villains to determine the villain and then continue by rolling on Table 2: Siblings.
18	A great hero.
19	Cared for by beasts. You might have run with a pack of wolves until you discovered civilization, or you might have been raised by intelligent magical beasts such as worgs or a unicorn. You gain training in Nature.
20	Adopted. Roll on this table twice more, once to determine the nature of your birth parents and again to determine the nature of your adoptive parents. If you get this result again, reroll.

Table 2: Siblings

Roll 1d20 to determine what siblings you have, if any. Afterward, roll on Table 3: Leaving Home.

d20	Result
1-2	None.
3	An identical twin.
4	A younger sister.
5	A younger brother.
6	An older sister.
7	An older brother.
8	Two sisters.
9	Two brothers.
10	An older sister and a stepbrother.
11	Two stepsisters.
12	A bastard younger brother.
13	You are the bastard sibling of two sisters and two brothers.
14	Three siblings.
15	Two stepsiblings, each with a different parent.
16	Six older siblings (you are the youngest).
17	An identical twin and a younger brother.
18	A fraternal twin.
19	Four younger siblings (you are the oldest).
20	Separated in youth from whatever family you have. Roll on this table again to determine your siblings.

Table 3: Leaving Home

Roll 1d20 to determine how your story begins.

d20	Result
1-5	You're sent away for tutelage. Roll on Table 4: Tutelage.
6	Your home is destroyed by a villain. Roll on Table 5: Villain to determine the villain. Your life of adventure begins. Alternatively, roll on Table 9: Vendetta.
7	You run away to join the circus. Roll on Table 30: Circus.
8	You run away from a cruel family member who wants to use you for a dire purpose. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
9	You elope. Roll on Table 12: Person to find out what happens next.
10	You leave in search of a missing or distant sibling. If you don't already have a sibling, you learn of a half-sister or half-brother. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
11	Much of your family dies in a plague. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle. Afterward, you can start your life of adventure, or you can roll on Table 17: Waylaid to see what happens next.
12	You're kidnapped and enslaved. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
13	You're press-ganged by pirates. Roll on Table 34: Press-Ganged.
14	Your family is ruined financially and blacklisted by a rival. You're forced to leave home and take up a life of crime to survive. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what kind of criminal you become. Then roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
15	You leave town with a caravan to see the world. Roll on Table 20: Caravan Guard.
16	You leave in search of a family heirloom or an ancient item of power. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
17	You are cursed and leave home so that your misfortune is not cast upon your family. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
18	Your family is placed under a spell, and you seek a wizard's aid in removing it. In payment, the wizard demands service. Roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower.
19	Your parents promise your service to a noble in order to pay a debt. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
20	You leave to explore the world. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up in the first part of your journey.

Table 4: Tutelage

Roll 1d20 to see what befalls you in your quest for knowledge.

d20	Result
1	You never make it to your destination. Roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
2-3	You become the assistant to a merchant. Add 10 gp to your starting gold. Roll on Table 6: Mercantile Matters.
4-5	You apprentice to a wizard. Roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower.
6-7	You accept religious instruction. Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple.
8-9	You join the military. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
10-11	You apprentice to a great craftmaker or artist. Roll on Table 12: Person to see what happens to your tutor.
12-13	You study with an actor. You become trained in Bluff. Roll on Table 12: Person to see what happens to your tutor.
14-15	Your tutor turns out to be a criminal. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what kind, and then roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
16-17	You join a circus instead. Roll on Table 30: Circus.
18-19	You serve in a noble's house. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
20	Your tutor has been killed by a villain. Roll on Table 5: Villain to find out what kind, and then roll on Table 3: Leaving Home to see what happens when you return home.

Table 5: Villain

Roll 1d20 to determine the villain.

d20	Result
1	Orcs
2	Goblins
3	A giant
4	A dragon
5	A wizard
6	A warlord
7	A vampire
8	A lich lord
9	A troll
10	A demon
11	A devil
12	A fey creature
13	A mind flayer
14	A doppelganger
15	A beholder
16	The leader of a thieves' guild
17	A powerful merchant
18	A noble
19	A wizard
20	The leader of a cult

Table 6: Mercantile Matters

Roll a Diplomacy check to see what befalls your mercantile efforts.

Check	Result
0-4	Your employer or a rival frames you for theft of wares, and you go to prison. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
5-8	You become embroiled in smuggling and fall in with thieves. Roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
9-11	Your sales skills aren't up to snuff, and you set out on caravan guard duty instead. Roll on Table 20: Caravan Guard.
12-14	You're an able merchant, but on one of your business trips, you are waylaid. You gain training in Diplomacy, and then roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
15-18	You make a fine showing in the marketplace, and other merchants look up to you. In fact, you're tasked with mediating the merchants' disputes. You gain training in Diplomacy, and then roll on Table 28: Mediation.
19+	You're a master merchant. Add 10 gp to your starting gold and gain training in Diplomacy. Unfortunately for you, a villain ruins your business. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind of villain. Then your life of adventure can begin, or you can roll on Table 9: Vendetta.

Table 7: Cursed

Roll 1d20 to determine the nature of the curse.

d20	Result
1-4	Food and drink have no taste, and music gives you no joy. You need information to lift the curse. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
5-7	Your kiss causes others to become nauseated and leaves them chilled to the bone. Only a particular person can lift the curse. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
8-10	Your eyes constantly weep tears of black ichor. You go to a wizard to lift the curse, but the wizard will help only if you render service first. Roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower.
11-13	One of your hands is made of mobile stone and has no sense of touch or heat. You go to a temple to have the curse removed, and in exchange for aid, you must serve the priests for a while. Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple.
14-16	You have a catlike eye that glows green and is surrounded by wrinkled black skin. You need a particular object to remove the curse. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
17-20	Your hand is a twisted and scaly claw. You have no idea how to remove the curse, but you're still seeking an answer. Your life of adventure begins.

Table 8: Arrival

You arrive in one of the following locations. Roll 1d20.

d20	Result
1	A seaside city. You find yourself press-ganged. Roll on Table 34: Press-Ganged.
2	A tavern on a trade route. Roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl.
3	A slavers' camp. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
4	A mountain fastness of dwarves. They ask your aid in ridding their tunnels of danger. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.
5	A wizard's tower. Roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower to see what happens next.
6	A noble's hunting grounds on which you are caught trespassing. Roll on Table 28: Mediation to see how you comport yourself.
7	A villain's lair. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind of villain it is, and then roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see what happens next.
8	A friend's house. Your friend needs your aid. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.
9	A military camp. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
10	A traveling community of halfling barges on a river. The halflings teach you how to hunt. You gain training in Perception. Roll on this table again to see where the river takes you.
11	A haunted house. You escape but are cursed during the experience. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
12	A small village in the wilderness. You endure a terrible winter before setting out in a desperate search for food. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how well you survive, and then roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
13	A town in a swamp. A plague sweeps through the people while you are there. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how well you survive, and then roll on Table 11: Seeking to see if you can find information that might lead to a cure for the plague.
14	A forest community of elves. They challenge your presence and demand that you prove yourself. Roll on Table 28: Mediation.
15	A noble's manor. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
16	On a trade route with a traveling circus. You join them for a while in your journey. Roll on Table 30: Circus to see what job you fulfill while among them.
17	The home of your friend. Your friend is missing, and you suspect foul play. Roll on Table 11: Seeking as you search for your friend.
18	A city straddling a river, bustling with trade. You become involved in mercantile matters. Roll on Table 6: Mercantile Matters.
19	A secret hideout of bandits. You steal some of their gold, but you flee when they spot you. Add 10 gp to your starting gold. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
20	The sacred grove of a cadre of dryads and treants. Make a Nature check (DC 12). If you succeed, the fey creatures forgive your trespass and send you on your way; roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival. If you fail, they curse you as you flee; roll on Table 7: Cursed.

Table 9: Vendetta

Roll 1d20 to see what happens during your pursuit of your vendetta.

d20	Result
1-2	You lose track of your foe when events intervene. Roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
3-5	While seeking to confront your foe, you become lost in the wilderness. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
6-8	You defeat your foe but are imprisoned by your foe's ally. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
9-11	You become trapped with your foe, and the two of you must rely on each other to survive. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle, and then Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up when you and your foe part ways.
12-14	Your foe tricks you into getting lost in a dungeon or cavern. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.
15-17	Your foe is too powerful, and you must talk your way out of the situation. Roll on Table 28: Mediation.
18-20	Your foe defeats you, but you escape to plot revenge. Your life of adventure starts now. Alternatively, you can roll on this table again as you attempt another run at your foe.

Table 10: Wizard's Tower

Roll an Arcana check to see what becomes of your time in the wizard's tower.

Check	Result
0-3	You ruin a ritual the wizard is performing and unleash a demon into the world. It battles the wizard, and you flee in the commotion. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
4-5	You accidentally break a crystal ball, and the angry wizard turns you into a toad and hurls you into a swamp. You live there for a month before you return to your normal form. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
6-7	You try to perform a spell and end up setting the tower aflame. The angry wizard teleports you away in frustration. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
8-9	You interrupt a ritual at a crucial moment, causing the wizard to be magically transported far away. Roll on Table 11: Seeking to see if you can find the wizard and make amends.
10-11	You release a homunculus that steals the wizard's wand and flies away. The wizard demands that you retrieve the wand or bring back one of greater power. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
12-13	You craft a bad potion and become ill when you drink it. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle. Then roll again on this table.
14-16	You save the wizard's spellbook from burning and are rewarded. You gain a *potion of healing* as part of your starting gear. Your life of adventure begins.
17-18	The wizard values your skills and recruits you for a wizard war that is brewing. You gain training in Arcana. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
19+	You surprise the wizard with your abilities. Pleased by your service, the wizard sends you into the world to learn more. You gain training in Arcana and a *potion of healing* as your part of your starting gear. Your life of adventure begins.

Table 11: Seeking

Roll a Streetwise check to see the result of your search.

Check	Result
0-4	You find no sign of that which you seek. Your life of adventure begins with this quest yet to be fulfilled.
5-8	While trying to use drinks to bribe folks to talk, you get deep in your cups and start a tavern brawl. Roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl.
9-13	In your search, you stumble over the activities of a villain who is offended by your investigations. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind of villain it is, and then roll on Table 19: On the Run.
14-17	You discover that you need another piece of the puzzle before you can find what you seek. You gain training in Streetwise. Roll on this table again, but this time you are seeking information.
18+	You gain training in Streetwise. You find what you're looking for. If it's a person, roll on Table 12: Person. If it's an object, roll on Table 13: Object. If it's information, roll on Table 14: Information.

Table 12: Person

Roll 1d20 to discover what occurs in regard to the person in question.

d20	Result
1-2	The person is killed by stirges. Your life of adventure begins. Alternatively, roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl to see what happens when you try to drown your sorrows with drink.
3-4	The person is being blackmailed by members of the Thieves' Guild. You infiltrate the group to discover the blackmailer. Roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
5-6	The person dies of disease. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare, and then your life of adventure begins. Alternatively, roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl to see what happens when you try to drown your sorrows with drink.
7-8	The person turns out to be a doppelganger. You flee before learning the whole story. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
9-10	The person is killed by a villain. Roll on Table 5: Villain to determine what kind of villain, and then roll on Table 9: Vendetta.
11-12	The person is kidnapped by a villain and held for ransom. You must retrieve a specific item for the villain, or you'll never see the person again. Roll on Table 5: Villain to determine what kind of villain, and then roll on Table 11: Seeking.
13-14	The person was only using you and actually despises you. He or she pushes you away. Disconsolate, you pay little attention to your surroundings and are waylaid. Roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
15-16	The person is preoccupied by a rival for his or her attentions. Roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see what happens when you try to win the person back.
17-18	The person turns out to be a family relation, such as a sibling or cousin. Your life of adventure begins with this revelation. Alternatively, roll again on this table to see what happens to the person. If you roll this result again, the familial relationship was a ruse to get information or an inheritance from you. Your life of adventure begins with the knowledge that you have been fooled and betrayed.
19-20	The person needs your help with a problem. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.

Table 13: Object

Roll 1d20 to discover what occurs in regard to the object in question.

d20	Result
1-4	The object is cursed. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
5-8	The object is stolen by a villain. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind, and then roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see the result of your attempt to reclaim the object.
9-12	The object was in the possession of a cloaked figure who committed a crime. When you are seen with it, you are accused and thrown in jail. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned to see what happens next.
13-16	The object is destroyed. Your life of adventure begins as you seek something to replace it.
17-20	You gain the object you seek. Your life of adventure begins with it in your possession.

Table 14: Information

Make a Streetwise check to discover what occurs in regard to the information in question.

Check	Result
0-4	You gain the information but must pay a hefty price. Subtract 20 gp from your starting gold.
5-7	The information you find is false. You're not sure whether someone deliberately deceived you, and you don't know where to turn for the truth. Your life of adventure begins now.
8-11	You ask too many questions, and someone pays for you to disappear. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
12-15	The information leads to another mystery. Roll on Table 11: Seeking to find more information.
16-18	You gain the information you seek. Your life of adventure begins with it in your possession.
19+	You become a skilled investigator. You gain the information you seek and discover a map to a valuable treasure to boot. You gain training in Streetwise and Perception and start your life of adventure.

Table 15: Crime

Roll 1d20 to determine the nature of the criminal activity.

d20	Result
1	Smuggling
2	Assassination
3	Burglary
4	Sedition
5	Picking pockets
6	Kidnapping
7	Robbery
8	Piracy
9	Poaching
10	Forgery
11	Counterfeiting
12	Swindling
13	Black market sales
14	Slavery
15	Sacrilege
16	Grave robbing
17	Blackmailing
18	Spying
19	Cheating at gambling
20	Impersonating a noble

Table 16: Enslaved

Roll 1d20 to find out what happens while you are enslaved.

d20	Result
1-2	You serve as a slave for years but are freed by a benevolent master. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare. You gain training in Endurance. Your life of adventure begins now.
3-4	You escape slavery and discover who arranged for your capture. If no likely culprit exists, roll on Table 5: Villain. Then roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see what happens when you pursue revenge against your foe.
5-6	You're forced to mine for precious metals deep underground. You gain training in Dungeoneering. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths to see what happens when you try to find a way out through the caverns.
7-8	You lead a slave revolt that is brutally crushed. You serve a few years in chains, despised by many slaves and mocked by your captors. Roll again on this table. If you get this result again, your captors consider you too much trouble and leave you to die of exposure in the wilderness: Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
9-10	An army liberates you and your fellow slaves. In return, you join their military effort. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
11-12	You escape when no one is looking, but your masters want you back. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
13-14	You lead a slave revolt, but as you flee with your fellows, fate moves against you. Roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
15-16	Nearly all the slavers die in a disaster that seems like divine retribution. Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple as you seek to pay homage to whichever deity freed you.
17-18	A noble buys you and allows you to work off your debt. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
19-20	A friend scrapes together enough money to buy your freedom, but he or she needs a favor in return. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.

Table 17: Waylaid

Roll 1d20 to determine what strange event befalls you.

d20	Result
1-2	War breaks out, and you're drafted. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
3-4	Bandits rob you and leave you tied up. Subtract 10 gp from your starting gold. You free yourself and seek revenge. Roll on Table 9: Vendetta.
5-6	You're imprisoned unfairly. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
7-8	You fall for someone and become distracted. Roll on Table 12: Person.
9-10	You stumble into a tavern, and things start to go wrong after you lose count of your drinks. Roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl.
11-12	A wizard charms you and takes you as a servant. Roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower.
13	Slavers catch you. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
14	You're press-ganged. Roll on Table 34: Press-Ganged.
15-16	You get lost in the wilderness. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
17-18	A fey creature entices you into the Feywild for years, but to you, the visit seems to last only a few days. Your life of adventure begins after you leave the Feywild. Alternatively, roll on Table 7: Cursed to see what curse the offended fey creature laid upon you in punishment for leaving.
19-20	You are delayed by a fierce storm in a place you had not intended to stop. Roll on Table 8: Arrival.

Table 18: A Friend in Need

Your friend needs your help. Roll 1d20 to see how you can aid your ally.

d20	Result
1-4	Your friend needs your help to commit a crime. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what kind. You succeed, but the Thieves' Guild demands that you do a job for them in recompense for your unsanctioned activity. Roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
5-8	Your friend needs your help to rescue a member of your family who is slated for execution. You succeed, but now you're wanted by the authorities. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
9-12	Your friend needs you to convince someone to allow your friend to wed. Roll on Table 28: Mediation to see the results of your attempt.
13-16	Your friend was only pretending to need your aid and instead uses you and frames you for a crime. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
17-20	Your friend doesn't really need your help. It was just a ruse to throw you a party. Roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl to see what happens when the party gets out of hand.

Table 19: On the Run

Trying to stay one step ahead of your pursuers requires sharp senses. Roll a Perception check.

Check	Result
0-4	Your pursuers capture you and sell you into slavery. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
5-7	Your pursuers capture and imprison you. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
8-10	Your flight from your foes is interrupted by fate. Roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
11-12	As you flee your foes, you never know whom to trust, and you're constantly concerned about others' motives. You gain training in Insight. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you run.
13-15	Your pursuers are right on your tail. You gain training in Perception. Your life of adventure begins with the knowledge that those who hunt you could show up at any moment.
16-18	You vanish without a trace, and your pursuers give up—for now. You gain training in Bluff. Your life of adventure begins.
19+	You spy your pursuers long before they find you, and you arrange for some of their enemies to spot them as well. They won't be chasing you—or anyone else—ever again. You gain training in Perception and Streetwise. Your life of adventure begins as word of your ruthless cunning spreads.

Table 20: Caravan Guard

Make a Perception check to see how your time as a caravan guard works out.

Check	Result
0-3	The caravan stops for the night, and other travelers join your campfires. Unfortunately, they are vampires that attack as you sleep. You run through the night as the cackling vampires follow you, and you escape only when your flight takes you to the steps of a temple. Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple.
4-6	A bulette suddenly starts tearing up the caravan. As you run to help, you fall through a crevasse opened by the monster and land amid tunnels underground. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.
7-8	A dragon attacks and picks up the wagon in which you and a few others take cover. You escape as the dragon flies low over some trees. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival to see how you fare in the wild.
9-11	Your duty proves uneventful—even boring. When your caravan makes a stop, you take a nap, and when you wake, the caravan has left you behind. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you were abandoned.
12-14	You serve the caravan well on its long journey. Add 10 gp to your starting gold. Your life of adventure begins.
15-17	A villain and its minions attack the caravan. You spot them in time to mount a strong defense and run them off. The villain swears vengeance upon you. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind; the next time you are asked to roll on Table 5, use this villain instead. You gain training in Perception. Roll on this table again as the caravan continues.
18+	You spot trouble on the road ahead and arrange a way to ambush the brigands lying in wait. The caravan master rewards you with extra pay and the opportunity to claim the bounty for capturing the brigands. You gain training in Perception. Add 10 gp to your starting gold. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you journey with your captives.

Table 21: Imprisoned

You're incarcerated with criminals of all sorts. Some might be innocent, but many are guilty of terrible deeds. Roll an Intimidate check to see how well you fare.

Check	Result
0-3	You rot in a dungeon for a year. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare, and then roll on this table again.
4-5	You stay for your term of several years. Subtract 10 gp from your starting gold. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle with a -5 penalty. Then roll on Table 11: Seeking as you attempt to reconnect with a family member or friend after your release.
6-8	You're forced to join a prison gang that's connected to a criminal group outside. They sneak you out, but in return you have to do a job for them. Roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
9-11	Your rowdy behavior marks you as a troublemaker, and you're sold into slavery rather than being kept in prison. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
12-14	You and your cellmate dig a tunnel and escape. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what your cellmate was guilty of and might return to now. Then roll on Table 19: On the Run to see what happens before you and your prison buddy part ways.
15-16	Your toughness is noticed by the prison boss, who pulls you out to serve the rest of your term in the military. You gain training in Intimidate. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
17-18	You're scheduled for execution. Luckily, a noble, impressed by your bravado in the face of death, intervenes and buys your freedom on the condition of your service. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
19+	You become the prisoners' leader. Through connections with people on the outside, your criminal followers arrange for your early release and for you to have money in your pocket when you get out. You gain training in Intimidate and Streetwise. Increase your starting gold by 20 gp. Your life of adventure begins.

Table 22: Military Service

You're in the army now! Roll an Athletics check to see what happens during your time as a soldier.

Check	Result
0-2	The chaos and bloodshed of the battlefield is too much, and you desert your unit. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
3-4	You're deemed a poor soldier and sent to guard the baggage train. Roll on Table 20: Caravan Guard.
5-6	Enemies surround your unit, and you barely escape with your life. You flee into the wilderness in enemy territory. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
7-8	The forces you fight alongside are beaten back and take shelter in a ruined castle. There you discover tunnels into a dungeon, and, rather than be trapped and killed in the ruin, you and a few other soldiers seek a path out underground. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.
9-10	You fight well, but not well enough to avoid capture. You are indentured to your enemies. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
11-12	Your unit ends up in a standoff with an enemy unit. Roll on Table 28: Mediation to see how your attempts at forming a truce turn out.

13-14	You survive your service but not without cost. You lost a limb and now use a prosthetic. You gain training in Athletics. Your life of adventure begins with your return from war. Alternatively, you might seek a magic false limb to replace the one you lost. In that case, roll on Table 11: Seeking.
15-16	You survive a war relatively unscathed and are released from service far from where you were inducted into the military. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
17-18	You perform well in the field and help many of your companions. You gain training in Heal as a result of your frequent treatment of battlefield injuries. You start your life of adventure.
19+	You become a war hero and rise through the ranks. You gain training in Athletics and add 15 gp to your starting gold. You start your life of adventure with a rank that gives you some military privileges and responsibilities.

Table 23: Tavern Brawl

The tavern erupts into a brawl. Make an Athletics check to see how well you fare.

Check	Result
0-4	You're unconscious on the floor when the watch arrives, and you are arrested. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
5-8	Through your bungling, the tavern catches fire and burns to the ground. You escape but have to flee. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
9-11	You end up knocked out on the floor, but the tavern owner admires your chutzpah and keeps you from being arrested. You still have to work off the damages with several months of labor. While working, you overhear a conspiracy, and when you report it, you're hired to infiltrate the group. Roll on Table 29: Hired to Spy.
12-15	You make a fine showing and slink away before anyone arrives to arrest the brawlers. You gain training in Athletics. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up next.
16-18	You fight all comers to a standstill and end up arm in arm with your opponents, using drink and song to assuage the pain of the bruises you gave one another. You gain training in Athletics and make several friends. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.
19+	You save the tavern owner's life and send the ruffians on the run. As a reward, you gain partial ownership of the tavern. You gain training in Athletics and an extra 10 gp in starting gold. Your life of adventure begins now.

Table 24: Wilderness Survival

Make a Nature check to determine what happens during your time in the wild.

Check	Result
0-5	You live a survivalist lifestyle in the wilderness for a year, never reaching civilization. You gain training in Nature. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare, and then roll on this table again.
6-7	You take shelter in a cave for the night and are forced to flee deeper into the tunnels when the owlbears that live in the cave return from their hunt. Roll on Table 25: Lost in the Depths.
8-9	You meet a prospecting dwarf looking for a new place to mine. The dwarf becomes a friend. After helping you back to civilization, he or she asks for a small favor. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.
10-11	You find a trail that seems to lead back to civilization. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
12-14	You discover a magical glade and meet a fey creature. It touches your forehead, and a thought appears in your mind before you fall unconscious. Roll on Table 32: A Fateful Message to see what you learned. Your life of adventure begins as you awaken far from the wondrous glade.
15-16	A druid confronts you in the wilderness. Impressed by your ability to survive, the druid teaches you more before escorting you to a road where you meet up with a passing caravan. You gain training in Nature. Roll on Table 20: Caravan Guard.
17-18	You befriend a wild horse in your wanderings and gain training in Nature. You begin your life of adventure with a warhorse by your side as you return to civilization.
19+	You become a great hunter and trapper skilled in the ways of the wild. You gain training in Nature and Stealth. You emerge from the wilderness a stronger person and start your life of adventure.

Table 25: Lost in the Depths

Make a Dungeoneering check.

Check	Result
0-5	You wander in darkness for days, subsisting on the few insects and bats you catch. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle with a -5 penalty to see how you fare. Then return to this table and roll again.
6-7	You're captured by duergar and brought to an Underdark slave market to be sold. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
8-9	You meet a prospecting dwarf looking for a new place to mine. The dwarf becomes a friend. After helping you back to civilization, he or she asks for a small favor. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.
10-12	In the tunnels, you discover a huge statue with ruby eyes. You pry out one of them but are forced to flee when a tribe of goblins chases you out of the tunnels. Increase your starting gold by 50 gp. Unfortunately, the ruby was cursed. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
13-15	You're wandering through the tunnels when confronted by a horrible mind flayer. Its tentacles flail at you, and everything goes black. You awaken someplace without any idea of how you got there or why the creature let you live. Eerily, you now know the Deep Speech language. You gain training in Dungeoneering. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
16-18	You wend your way through the tunnels until you discover a villain's lair. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind. You steal a map to a fabulous treasure from the lair and use the villain's tunnels to escape to the surface. You gain training in Stealth. Your life of adventure begins with the map in your possession.
19+	You survive your time beneath the ground surprisingly well, becoming adept at quietly exploring. You gain training in Dungeoneering and Stealth. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you emerge.

Table 26: Thieves' Guild

Make a Thievery check.

Check	Result
0-5	The guild uses you as a patsy and frames you. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what you were framed for, and then proceed to Table 21: Imprisoned.
6-7	The guild sets you on a job, but you're caught in the act before you can complete it. Roll on Table 15: Crime to see what you were doing. Guild members rescue you from the authorities before you're put in prison, but now you're wanted by the law. Proceed to Table 19: On the Run.
8-9	Your work takes you close to the docks one too many times, and you're press-ganged. Roll on Table 34: Press-Ganged.
10-11	You perform several small jobs for the guild but catch the attention of the authorities. They don't have enough evidence to imprison you, so instead you're banished. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
12-14	You do well enough on your mission for the guild, but the leaders are still unsure about you. Add 10 gp to your starting gold and roll on this table again. If you get this result again, you've earned enough trust and respect to be accepted as a full guild member. You gain training in Thievery, and your life of adventure begins.
15-16	Your skills are highly prized by the Thieves' Guild, and soon you're getting most of the best work. A rival in the guild takes poorly to your rise through the ranks and forces a confrontation. You gain training in Thievery and Stealth. Roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see how things turn out with your rival.
17-18	You pull many cunning heists and gain a reputation as a great thief under an assumed name. Eventually, the authorities catch up with you, but they don't throw you in prison. Instead, in recompense for your crimes, they want you to spy for them. You gain training in Thievery and Bluff. Roll on Table 29: Hired to Spy.
19+	You become an expert criminal, and when the guild's leader is killed by the villainous head of a rival organization, the guild members elect you their new leader. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see who leads the rival gang. You gain training in Thievery and Streetwise. Your life of adventure begins with you in charge of a guild of thieves and in control of its territory.

Table 27: Called to the Temple

Make a Religion check.

Check	Result
0–4	Your behavior offends the gods, and you are cursed. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
5–7	You ruin a religious observance and accidentally set fire to the temple. The priests attack before you can explain that it was a mistake, and you are forced to flee. Now they hunt you. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
8–10	You ask impertinent questions about the temple's dogma, creating disparate interpretations that set the priests against one another. Roll on Table 28: Mediation to see whether you can prevent a schism in the church.
11–13	You receive a mysterious vision that none of the priests can explain. They send you to find a wandering oracle of their order so that you might learn more. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
14–16	Your scholarship in the temple and desire to learn impress the priests. They teach you all they can and send you to a tutor so that you can continue your pursuit of knowledge. You gain training in Religion. Roll on Table 4: Tutelage.
17–18	Your devotion at the temple impresses the priests who serve there. They send you into the world to spread the word. You gain training in Religion and Heal. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where your journey takes you next.
19+	You gain divine inspiration while at the temple. You gain training in Religion and Insight. Roll on Table 32: A Fateful Message to learn what truth is revealed to you in a vision. Your life of adventure begins now.

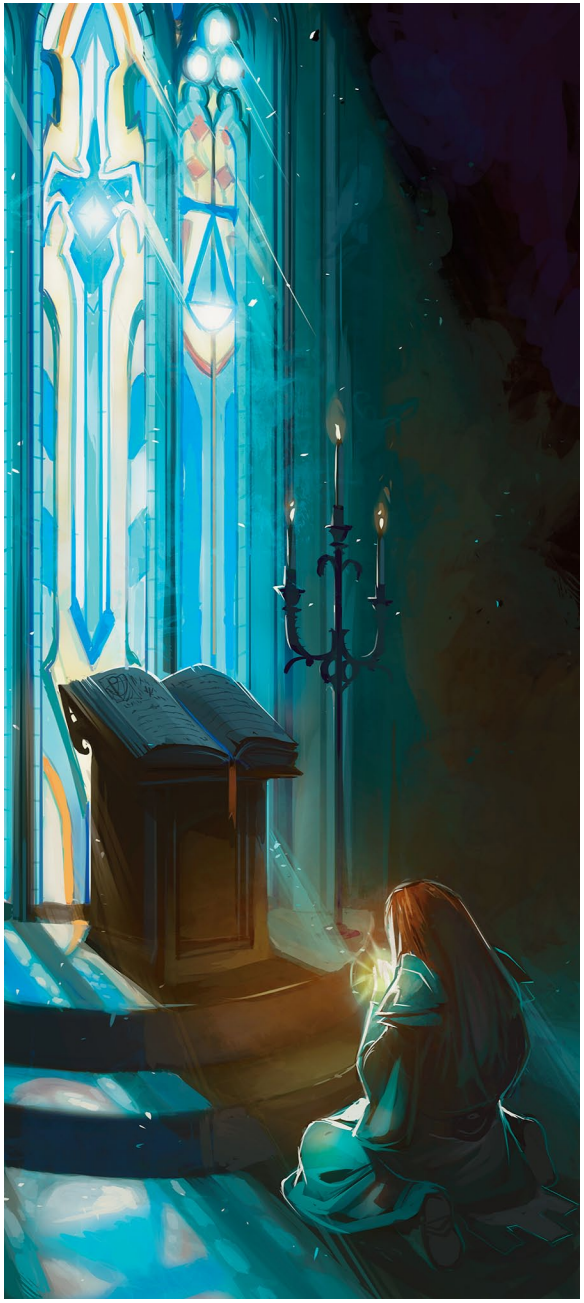

Table 28: Mediation

Make a Diplomacy check.

Check	Result
0–4	The mediation fails, and your mismanagement of the situation becomes the flashpoint for a new war. You're pressed into service for one side. Roll on Table 22: Military Service.
5–6	Your efforts at diplomacy fail utterly, and you are forced to flee the angered party. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
7–8	Those with whom you're deliberating can be assuaged only by the return of an object sacred to them. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
9–11	Your diplomacy skills aren't up to snuff, and those with whom you're negotiating demand that you find someone else to speak for you before they make a decision. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
12–14	You eke out a diplomatic success, but the angered party demands that you leave as a condition of peaceful resolution. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up after being escorted away.
15–17	You make a convincing argument and win the respect of those with whom you're speaking. Your wisdom in such matters draws the attention of a noble. You gain training in Diplomacy. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
18+	Your eloquence impresses those with whom you speak, and they agree to your terms. You're considered an honored guest and given tokens of their appreciation. Your starting gold increases by 10 gp. You gain training in Diplomacy and Insight. Your life of adventure starts now.

Table 29: Hired to Spy

Make a Bluff check.

Check	Result
0–3	You bungle your cover identity almost immediately, and those on whom you're spying throw you in the dungeons. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
4–5	You ingratiate yourself with your targets, but you get too close to one in whom you're romantically interested. When you let slip the truth, you enrage your paramour. Now you're being pursued by the allies of your paramour and by those on your team who survived the purge. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
6–7	The target of your spying mission is a friend. You betray your employers and try to help your friend instead. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.
8–9	While on a mission, you encounter a rival spy, and things get dicey. Your rival escapes with the information you need, and you set off in pursuit. Roll on Table 9: Vendetta.
10–13	Your spying reveals a conspiracy, but you don't have all the pieces. You set about finding information that might reveal the truth. Roll on Table 11: Seeking.
14–16	Your reconnaissance leads you to do a great deal of research and form close relationships with scholars of topics of interest to your mission. But the information you gather is used in an unexpected way, and now those scholars are in danger. You gain training in History. Your life of adventure begins with those who aided you and is threatened by the events of your past.
17–18	A dangerous villain is working with those on whom you are spying. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind. Through excellent bluffing, you get close to this villain and steal the information you need. After you're gone, the villain figures out what you did. You gain training in Bluff. Roll on Table 19: On the Run to see what happens as you flee with the stolen information.
19+	You meet a rival spy in the course of your mission, and the two of you play a game of brinkmanship with banter and skullduggery. You part on friendly terms, both leaving the target of your spying none the wiser. You gain training in Bluff and Stealth. Your life of adventure begins.

Table 30: Circus

Roll 1d20 to determine your involvement with the circus. If you've already been in the circus, you can choose a result you had before.

d20	Result
1	Before your life with the circus can begin, a villain devastates it. Only a few performers survive along with you. Roll on Table 5: Villain to determine the attacker, and then roll on Table 9: Vendetta to see what happens when you and the other circus performers seek revenge.
2	Flea circus. Make a Perception check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins after a successful season with the circus. If you fail, you get a case of fleas, and your life of adventure begins with you having fleas.
3	Mime. Make a Bluff check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill and earn another season of work with the circus; roll on this table again. If you fail, you're kicked out of the circus and are waylaid while you wander the roads; roll on Table 17: Waylaid.
4	Sideshow freak. Make an Intimidate check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins. If you fail, you're tossed out of the circus; roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
5	Clown. Make a Diplomacy check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill and catch the attention of a noble who wants to hire a jester for a child; roll on Table 33: Nobility. If you fail, your life of adventure begins with the disgrace of being kicked out of the circus.
6	Strongman. Make an Athletics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, but your strong body attracts the attention of a press gang; roll on Table 34: Press-Ganged. If you fail, you're not paid; subtract 10 gp from your starting gold and start your life of adventure.
7	Trick rider. Make an Athletics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins. If you fail, you are injured; roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how well you pull through, and then your life of adventure begins after the sympathetic circus members leave you behind.

8	Escape artist. Make an Athletics or Acrobatics check (DC 12), and then make an Endurance check (DC 12). If you succeed on both checks, you gain training in both skills, and your life of adventure begins after a successful season with the circus. If you fail either check, a member of the Thieves' Guild becomes your mentor; roll on Table 26: Thieves' Guild.
9	Animal trainer. Make a Nature check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins after a successful season with the circus. If you fail, your animal escapes into the wilderness, and you chase after it; roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
10	Dancer. Make an Acrobatics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill and catch the eye of a noble who summons you; roll on Table 33: Nobility. If you fail, you take your act to the tavern circuit; roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl.
11	Magician. Make a Thievery check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and a wizard takes interest in teaching you real magic; roll on Table 10: Wizard's Tower. If you fail, your act is laughable; go to result 5 in this table and perform as a clown.
12	Contortionist. Make an Acrobatics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and you catch the attention of a spymaster who needs to smuggle someone with your talents into an enemy camp; roll on Table 29: Hired to Spy. If you fail, the crooked circus master sells you into slavery; roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
13	Gymnast. Make an Athletics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins. If you fail, you return home in disgrace; roll on Table 3: Leaving Home.
14	Juggler. Make a Thievery check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and your life of adventure begins. If you fail, you're tossed out of the circus; roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
15	Sword swallower. Make an Endurance check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, your life of adventure begins, and you take your act on the road; roll on Table 17: Waylaid to see what happens after you set out. If you fail, your life of adventure begins with you mute until the first extended rest you take after reaching a milestone.
16	Acrobat. Make an Acrobatics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and you meet a noble who takes interest in you. The noble has a vendetta against a villain, and you become embroiled in that struggle. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind, and then roll on Table 9: Vendetta. If you fail the Acrobatics check, you are injured; roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how well you pull through, and then your life of adventure begins after the sympathetic circus members leave you behind.
17	Knife thrower. Make a basic ranged attack against AC 15. If you hit, you gain training in Perception and your life of adventure begins. If you miss, you accidentally kill or injure someone, and you are imprisoned; roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
18	Fire eater. Make an Endurance check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill and take your act on the road; roll on Table 23: Tavern Brawl to see what happens at one of your shows. If you fail, your life of adventure begins with you mute until the first extended rest you take after reaching a milestone.

19	Fortune teller. Make a Bluff check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and you scare yourself with a strange prediction; roll on Table 32: A Fateful Message. If you fail, you offend a genuine soothsayer with your act, and you are cursed; roll on Table 7: Cursed.
20	Ringleader. Make a Diplomacy check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in the skill, and a merchant hires you away from the circus as a salesperson; add 10 gp to your starting gold, and roll on Table 6: Mercantile Matters. If you fail, the circus closes after a few bad shows. Your life of adventure begins with many of the circus performers blaming you for the loss of their livelihood, and some might seek revenge.

Table 31: Test Your Mettle

Make an Endurance check.

Check	Result
0–4	You nearly die. You now walk with a pronounced limp and have a wracking cough, a twisted hand, a blind eye, or another pronounced ailment.
5–8	You barely survive. The experience scars you physically and mentally, but you find ways to compensate for it.
9–12	You pull through after some difficulty, but your spirits are high.
13–16	You come through with flying colors. You gain training in Endurance.
17+	That was easy. You emerge stronger than before. You gain training in Athletics and Endurance.

Table 32: A Fateful Message

Roll 1d20. Your life of adventure begins after you learn the message.

d20	Result
1	You are the harbinger of the world's end.
2	You will discover a great treasure that must be returned to its owner or you will never achieve your dreams.
3	You are destined to be a kingmaker.
4	Dark forces consider you their own.
5	A god considers you special and is keeping close watch on you.
6	You were parted at birth from a twin.
7	Your family is not your own. You're the lost heir to a throne.
8	You were not born. You were created.
9	Two souls reside in your body.
10	Your soulmate is trapped in an object held by a villain. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind.
11	A villain was once a great friend of your family. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind.
12	A relative wears a false face.
13	You can count your true friends on one hand.
14	One of your friends will betray you soon.
15	An enemy is closer than you think.
16	Do not trust maps when you are lost.
17	Advice you will soon seek will steer you wrong.
18	Take no journey over water for a month.
19	Seek shelter from the storm unless it comes from the north.
20	Do not trust your instincts at night.

Table 33: Nobility

Make an Insight check to navigate the treacherous social landscape of the noble's household.

Check	Result
0–3	Your "service" in the noble's house is actually as a slave. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
4–5	The noble sets you to a task that turns out to be illegal. You are arrested for the crime, and the noble lets you rot in jail. Roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
6–7	One of the noble's relations takes too much of a liking to you, and the infuriated noble banishes you to end the budding relationship. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
8–9	You participate in a masquerade ball and delight people with your uproarious behavior, but after the masks come off, you make the mistake of continuing, which insults guests and embarrasses your host. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up after being cast out of the noble's service.
10–11	You and a son or daughter of the noble become very close and decide to elope. Roll on Table 12: Person to see what happens as you flee the angry noble.
12–14	The noble grows so confident in you that you become embroiled in the house's mercantile affairs. You gain training in Insight. Roll on Table 6: Mercantile Matters.
15–17	The noble takes such a liking to you that you are promised to a scion of the house. You gain training in Insight. Add 20 gp to your starting gold. Your life of adventure begins before you are married.
18+	The noble becomes a good friend. You gain training in Insight and Diplomacy. Roll on Table 18: A Friend in Need.

Table 34: Press-Ganged

You're knocked out, and you wake aboard a ship far out at sea. Now you're part of the crew.

d20	Result
1-5	You're forced into a life of piracy for a year. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how well you fare, and then roll on this table again.
6-7	The ship gets stuck in the doldrums for weeks. When the wind finally picks up, it blows you to shore near a great temple. Out of gratitude to the gods, you serve the temple for a while. Roll on Table 27: Called to the Temple.
8-9	You lead a mutiny against the captain. Make an Athletics check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in Athletics and start your life of adventure as captain of a ship and small crew. If you fail, you are imprisoned when the ship reaches port; roll on Table 21: Imprisoned.
10	You serve well in a naval war. Increase your starting gold by 10 gp. Roll on Table 22: Military Service to see what happens when you continue your service on land.
11	You slip away while hunting on a mysterious coast. Roll on Table 24: Wilderness Survival.
12	A sea monster sinks the ship. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare before being rescued by a noble's passing ship. Roll on Table 33: Nobility.
13	A villain sinks the ship and takes you captive. Roll on Table 5: Villain to see what kind. One of the villain's followers takes pity on you and secretly gives you the means to escape. Your life of adventure begins with an enemy and a potential friend in the enemy's camp.
14	A mysterious storm carries the ship far off course, and you arrive at a strange island. While exploring the island, you become cursed, and the crew drops you off at the nearest port. Roll on Table 7: Cursed.
15	You get duty in the crow's nest. Make a Perception check (DC 12). If you succeed, you gain training in Perception, and your life of adventure begins after a successful stint at sea. If you fail, the ship runs aground. You are considered bad luck and put ashore; your life of adventure begins.
16	You anger the captain and are forced to walk the plank. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle. Subtract 20 gp from your starting gold. Your life of adventure begins when you are washed ashore.
17	You steal a treasure map from the ship and sneak ashore. Now you're on the run from the sailors who want the map back. Roll on Table 19: On the Run.
18	Pirates attack the ship and capture you, selling you into slavery. Roll on Table 16: Enslaved.
19	You're marooned on an island after offending the captain. Roll on Table 31: Test Your Mettle to see how you fare on the tiny island before being rescued. Roll on Table 8: Arrival to see where you end up.
20	You become friends with the captain and convince him or her to turn to the peaceful ways of shipping. You gain training in Diplomacy. Roll on Table 6: Mercantile Matters to see how you represent the captain's interests when you are ashore.

About the Author

Matt Sernett is a writer and game designer for Wizards of the Coast who has worked on both Dungeons & Dragons® and Magic: The Gathering®. His recent credits include *Halls of Undermountain*™, *Neverwinter*™ *Campaign Guide*, and *Scars of Mirrodin*™. When he's not making monsters or building worlds, he's watching bad fantasy movies you don't realize exist and shouldn't bother to learn about. You can follow him on Twitter, where he's @Sernett.

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

ED GREENWOOD'S
Eye on the Realms

Barlar's Bucket Helm

By Ed Greenwood

Illustration by Hector Ortiz

Not so long ago in Sembia, a veteran mercenary decided to seek more coin at somewhat less daily risk. He proudly dubbed himself Sir Belasko the Lion, drew himself a blazon in defiance of the Heralds, and hired himself out as a bodyguard to Sembia's nobility. His earnings soared, and he promptly commissioned a gleaming suit of silvered and *everbright*-treated full plate armor that made him look impressive indeed.

The strutting boldness of his own reflection, encased in his bright new armor, mightily impressed Belasko—and left him lusting after a new helm to match. When a grateful client bequeathed him an impressive stack of coin, Belasko promptly hired a coin-poor wizard to make him a suitably grand enchanted helm.

He then proceeded to pester the mage repeatedly about this detail of the helm—until the wizard's temper erupted, and Barlar Belasko's Bucket Helm appeared in the Realms.

Barlar Belasko

Behold a man of above average height and good looks, possessed of a certain glibness of tongue and an elegant mustache. "Always attractive to the ladies," in his own words, muscular, and well trained in sword-work and basic tactics thanks to long service with the Three Eagles and later the Swan Banners mercenary companies in Chessenta,[1] followed by a swift relocation to Sembia, and service with Red Deragro's Roisterers.[2]

This man is also a hiresword commander with a talent for diplomacy (not to mention swiftly making friends and intimates), and he is given to a trifle more laziness than most. A man for whom conquests and successes in convincing and cozening others are so easy that he begins to believe in his own innate superiority.

This is Barlar Belasko, born in Luthcheq and reared in the strife between independent cities that has marked life in Chessenta for centuries.[3] Good with a blade and pleasant company, Barlar is always apt to outspend his takings to procure good wine and to shower gifts on partners to drink it with as they share beds—and handy glades, floors, parked coaches, and tomb-tops.

This man, like all others, began to feel the weight of passing years, a certain slowness of the swordarm and weariness of vision late of evenings, aches in the knees and back. This carefree career cannot continue

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forever, and not more than a handful of coins has been saved for the slow withering ahead.

So a shift in career presents itself like a glowing thunderbolt from the gods, and is made, and The Knight of the Lion arises, Heralds be damned—and later sneeringly bested, when a noble patron is convinced to perform a knighting (in return for a discount on bodyguarding services).[4] The new career flourishes, and the hard travel and rough living out-of-doors of the working mercenary gives way to better and more frequent pay. Boredom rises, and the minor irritations of having constant contact with spoiled fools as clients—but that "minor" is firmly borne in mind, and more golden days unfold.

Yet ambition is not forsaken, and personal betterment is pursued. Say the right things, make the right friends, improve equipage with armor better than many a king can boast.

Expensive armor with grandeur that unfortunately lacks that little edge of enchantment that protects against a malicious arrow or a hostile spell . . . a lack there's now coin enough to address.

So survey available wizards in need enough of coin to undertake enchanting a helm, yet with skill in Art great enough to accomplish such work.

In Selgaunt, where Sir Belasko the Lion now resides, secure in a long-term contract to safeguard the heir and eldest daughter of the self-styled noble Crammarth family of that city,[5] the best possible mages (that is, those within his budget, in decreasing order of public profile and social standing) seem to be:

- Caldreth Vorhouend, a darkly handsome, dashing young scourge of the ladies much given to casting small, visually impressive magic for hire—spells designed to make his patrons seem formidable and not to be trifled with. He lives in modest lodgings in a "good" part of the city and is making important friends and climbing in social status. Local gossip states that his ambition and confidence has far outstripped his mastery of the Art and the depths of his purse, which has left him heavily in debt and always rushing to partially placate creditors (because his coins are too few to wholly placate any of them). He attends many revels for the food and drink.
- Thanczur Delbrin, a quiet, studious, "patchcloaked poor"[6] mage, dwells in cheap cellar rooms and seems preoccupied with mastering the making of minor wands.
- Brelnarra Hardyngale is an abrasive, hardworking former cook in a grand house, whose temper and sharp tongue are mated with "broken-nosed brawler"[7] looks but very swift wits and shrewd judgment of people—so although she might lack the manner and beauty to effortlessly manipulate most folk, she can correctly divine how they'll react and what is most likely to move them to acceptance, anger, fear, or greater calm. Possessed of a great natural aptitude and capacity for the Art, she unfortunately has had very limited access to written spells and few opportunities for study or tutelage. She can cast very minor spells for hire; assists many visiting adventurers in hopes of getting her hands on more magic, and seeks to continually advance herself. She lives in ramshackle shared attic lodgings nigh the docks.
- Englobur Dalbellow, a fat, weakly smiling, mild-mannered bumbler, seems prone to everyday and magical accidents—and has been dismissed as an apprentice at least twice as a result of his clumsy misfortunes. He is capable, under duress, of casting spells far beyond his accomplishments—but unreliably and rarely; these words also apply to minor magic he's supposedly well-versed in. As a result, he cannot earn a living from his Art, and so he is a poor, perpetually-in-debt fishmonger's assistant on the docks.[8]

So Sir Belasko contacts all four. His manner results in stinging words with Hardyngale, cows Dalbellow so utterly that the man drops six large fish and covers Belasko and much of the nearby floor and fishgutting tables with stinking and slimy fishguts, and makes a sneering Vorhouend try to swindle him—so he settles on Thanczur Delbrin.

Thanczur Delbrin

This quiet man has happily withdrawn from the cut-and-thrust of Sembian society and the worrisome politics of the wider world, to devote his time and attention to crafting minor wands. He sells each one the moment it's done to gain coin enough to pay for his rent, food, and the materials he needs to make more wands and to experiment with magic. He is almost entirely self-taught, with frequent prayers to Mystra and long days and nights of painstaking work. He has become an obsessive perfectionist.

He is polite and soft-spoken, a man of few words whose anger tends to build for tendays and even months before erupting—and an eruption is what occurred when Barlar Belasko badgered him and burst in to oversee what he was doing once too often.

Belasko began as the client of Delbrin's dreams, requesting a suitably grand warrior's helm to match his gleaming armor—one that would protect him with a *shield* (against hostile arrows) and a *feather fall* defense, when commanded, and would deflect away all natural and magical lightning so its wearer would take no harm. All well and good; Delbrin knew he would have to push himself beyond his current mastery to achieve so full a lightning protection, but knew he could manage the rest. He even knew an armorer who could provide a helm of suitable appearance.

Yet as he worked, an increasingly impatient Belasko took to walking in on him (not difficult, given the sort of door his lodgings had) at any time of day or night, and demanding to know just how far progress on the helm had come, and every last exacting detail of how enchantments had been laid. Belasko would linger to watch—and critique.

Delbrin started to seethe inwardly and have nightmares—dark dreams that were broken more than once by the real Belasko shaking him awake and demanding yet another accounting.

One night, after Belasko had finally departed, Delbrin left his lodgings, walked to the end of one of the docks, and roared his fury to the stars. Then he went back to his lodgings to scheme—but on the way, kicked angrily through some rusty odds and ends that had fallen off a heap of rusty scrap waiting to be melted down, over a wall into Delbrin's alley . . . and looked at what he was kicking, and got an idea.

So it was that a rusty former farmer's slop-bucket, still smelling faintly of the ripe food scraps it had carried to hogs until it had rusted through and acquired a hole in its side, became Sir Belasko the Lion's enchanted war-helm.

And Delbrin's rage turned to ill-concealed mirth.

One Rusty Bucket

The wizard secretly returned the grand new helm to the armorer for a profit (thanks to the *everbright* and *shield* magics he had endowed it with), and he set to work on the rusty slop bucket. It retained its original metal handle, sheathed in a filthy wooden handgrip, and Delbrin left that adornment intact, but enlarged the hole in the bucket to serve as a proper viewing port for the intrepid Sir Belasko—when the inverted bucket was worn over his head.

Delbrin boiled the bucket to drive down the smell, then endowed it with all the magical properties his client had requested (though the lightning deflection is only partial, redirecting any sort of lightning ten feet away at most and reducing its damage to the helm-wearer only by half).

Delbrin also added an effect that functions when active magics that are not of the helm come into contact with the bucket: a feminine voice (actually provided by Delbrin, who is something of a mimic) purrs, "If it's wands you need, see Thanczur Delbrin."

Delbrin then applied a magic he's proud of, which works in full sunlight and fades in anything less: an illusion that makes the rusty bucket gleam as if it's the grand new helm Delbrin started with.

The Saga Thus Far

The wizard presented the enspelled bucket to his client and duly received the balance of his payment. Delbrin explained away the rusty bucket looks and feel with this statement: "It's part of a disguise effect that will make most spells just miss you, and keep dragons from seeing you entirely!"

This delighted Belasko.

Delbrin's own delight is renewed every time he sees the proud Knight of the Lion strut past, peering at the world out of a rusty bucket.

There was much amusement around Selgaunt, and when rumors spread that Delbrin had tricked Belasko, the wizard hinted to many not only was the helm far grander than its rusty-bucket looks suggested, but that he had endowed it with a hidden higher purpose—and that Belasko had been fortunate indeed to be able to procure such a special helm.

Eventually this talk reached Belasko's ears, and he returned to Delbrin to demand the mage tell him all about this "higher purpose." Whereupon the wizard informed him that so long as he, Delbrin, remained hale and healthy, his life force would act to counter and reduce the fell powers of any undead that attack the wearer of the helm. And as long as Belasko guarded himself against excessive pride and philandering, any valiant act he performed while wearing the helm would bring him a step closer to Mystra's revealing the higher purpose to him.

So it is that Delbrin spent some months on his knees begging Mystra for forgiveness[9]—and that Barlar Belasko has begun to behave valiantly on occasion—peering at the world out through a hole in a rusty bucket all the while.

Notes

1. Chessenta has traditionally been dominated by proudly independent and often fractious city-states, that betimes war on their neighbors and harbor constant internal feuds and disputes (usually between wealthy families), so it has always offered ready employment to mercenary warriors to serve as armies, skirmishers to perform illicit harassments, and bodyguards.

The Three Eagles mercenary company, now defunct, was formed by three "warcaptains" (veteran commanders) of good reputation: Arnarhlas Horland, Kalaghar Deldraeth, and Redrar "the Red" Calloghannan. It collapsed when Deldraeth made war on Horland over shares of plunder (and both men perished in the resulting feud), and "the Red" departed Chessenta for the Shining South, to seek mercenary employment somewhere "safer and more orderly."

The Swan Banners company was a small but well-equipped and disciplined band of heavy cavalry lancers led by knights who'd come from Cormyr and Tethyr to fight for pay in Chessenta. Founded and led by Sir Gorlskar "Longhammer" Longaharr of Waymoot and Sir Brandreth Tarsil of Riatavin, it survives today as a larger fighting force of non-knights variously equipped, under the low-born half-orc Garanthur "Gauntfist." Belasko departed the Swan Banners after four tendays of service, disliking how non-knight members were treated.

2. Raered "Red" Deragro is a sandy-bearded, stout, and spirited (even "energetic and gleefully wicked," in the words of Elminster) adventurer who takes great delight in the small rudenesses and ploys of an adventuring life. When his thefts, acts of violence, and defiances of local law led to his adventuring band, the Red Blades, being outlawed in Selgaunt and Saerloon, he promptly formed a mercenary company, Red Deragro's Roisterers, with the Blades as its commanders, and carried on adventuring as before, using the "underlings" of the company as agents in his more

illicit adventuring exploits and to perform above-board mercenary guarding activities.

Belasko loved his time with the Roisterers, but very soon saw that he and his fellow underlings were repeatedly serving as scapegoats—and so left the company before he faced imprisonment or exile. He remains on good terms with Deragro, he believes—but he can't be sure, because the leader of the Roisterers went into hiding after angering too many wealthy and powerful Sembians.

3. Barlar's father, Helmund Belasko, was a respected ship refitter, considered by many to be the city's best maker of turnbuckles, pulleys, and windlasses during his time. His mother, Mreljassa Belasko, was a capable clerk in local governance whose able handling of tax increases and disputes with both shipowners using the port and local wealthy families earned her a succession of ever-higher-ranking posts in city government. When a winter fever struck her down (and broke Helmund's heart, leading to his own death some months later), Mreljassa was responsible for both the daily running and provisioning of the harbor and for settling all legal disputes in the city.

Barlar liked his parents but found them intimidating, and he was happy to strike out on his own after they had bankrolled his training-at-arms and bought him a modest stable of war horses.

4. Barlar Belasko was knighted by one Maerit Onthsund, a minor noble of Cormyr exiled for his involvement in a minor plot to defraud the Crown, and long resident in Saerloon. (A handful of Onthsunds remain in Cormyr, most notably the courtier Davreede Onthsund, Master of the Dining Hall at the Royal Palace in Suzail.) Maerit Onthsund is a moneylender and a small-holdings investor in many a Sembian venture, and he ended up being owed so much by so many that he began to fear that some of his debtors would seek to make what they owed vanish by having Onthsund killed.

This reckoning hasn't come to pass . . . yet.

5. The wealthy Crammarths use the device of a fishhook made of a row of gold stars, descending the left side of a black (and gold-band-edged) shield and hooking around its bottom to raise a barbed point on the lower right side. This commemorates how they first tasted wealth (as successful fishing fleet owners); they are today among Selgaunt's largest landlords and stylish home builders and "drapers" (importers of large tapestries, hangings, and curtains).

Lord Hansribal Crammarth and Lady Olome Crammarth have three sons and two daughters. Belasko's duties largely consisted of keeping the eldest son and heir, the stiffly pompous and priggish Lorend Crammarth, from being led astray by the second son, the suave and self-serving Nandreth (a frankly evil rake who covets the family wealth, and would love to see Lorend dead) and the wild, reckless wastrel third son, Relvar.

And then there's the younger daughter, Oloronele, who seems to want to bed half of Sembia and profit thereby. She openly wants Lorend and her parents dead, with her brother Nandreth heading the family, so she can get on with the business of spending every last Crammarth coin.

Belasko also had to guard the quiet and sensible eldest Crammarth daughter, Claerethe, against Oloronele's attempts to corrupt and discredit her.

6. "Patchcloaked poor" is a current term for the condition of poverty we real-world types might in earlier generations have described as "poor as a church mouse." It refers to someone literally too poor to afford a new cloak, and therefore forced to patch and repatch (almost always with scraps of material that don't match) the one cloak they own.

7. This phrase is part of everyday speech in the Heartlands, not a direct personal description of Brelnarra. A "broken-nosed brawler" is anyone with coarse and/or battered features, or who is generally deemed ugly thanks to misshapen or mismatched features (such as one eye visibly larger or higher than another, or a gigantic and asymmetrical nose). A handsome person who broke his or her nose, even in a brawl, wouldn't be termed "a broken-nosed brawler" except maliciously.

8. Englobur Dalbellow is employed at Relrohir's Finefreshfish in Keel Alley, hard by the docks. This noisome, largely open-air fish-gutting shed and market is the home of the irascible Manglas Relrohir, a former pirate and expert knife thrower, fish cutter, and butcher. Dalbellow is the oldest and nicest of five hardworking assistants to Relrohir, who brings many mistresses home—and secretly uses them as couriers and go-betweens in his thriving smuggling business.

Relrohir connects unscrupulous ship captains with far more unscrupulous wealthy merchants and self-styled nobles of Selgaunt. He lends Dalbellow money to keep him in food and fend off his creditors, knowing this will keep Dalbellow working at the Finefreshfish. It's handy to have a wizard gratefully beholden to you.

9. Delbrin's prayers reverted to gentle reverence of Mystra when Elminster (whose farscrying of Delbrin made possible this entire story being made known to your humble scribe) took pity on the wizard, and sent him a dream vision indicating that his deception had the amused approval of the goddess. As Elminster put it, "Making an arrogant brute of a swordsman behave better is no small thing. Now if we could only steer every swordswinger in the Realms . . ."

About the Author

Ed Greenwood is the man who unleashed the Forgotten Realms® setting on an unsuspecting world. He works in libraries, plus he writes fantasy, science fiction, horror, mystery, and romance stories (sometimes all in the same novel), but he is happiest when churning out Realmslore, Realmslore, and more Realmslore.

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